Newbattle Abbey
LIBRARY.
Press N. Shelf k.

NEWB. 917.



NATIONAL LIBRARY
OF SCOTLAND
12 March 1951

NEWBATTLE COLLECTION

Bequeathed by
Philip Henry Kerr
11th Marquess of Lothian

Liv 000
fol 20 98

h.7.17.

The Great Concern;

OR A

SERIOUS WARNING

To a Timely and Thorough

PREPARATION

FOR

DEATH;

With Helps and Directions in order thereunto.

By *EDWARD PEARSE.*

John 9. 4. *I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: The night cometh when no Man can work.*

Recommended as proper to be given at *Funerals.*

The Twelfth Edition.

LONDON;

Printed for *J. Robinson*, at the Golden Lion in St. *Paul's* Church-yard, and *B. Aylmer*, at the three Pigeons in *Cornhil*, over against the Royal Exchange. 1686.

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF SCOTLAND

To the READER.

READER,

IF thou art one, who indeed liveſt in the belief of a future Life, on Eternity of Happineſs or Miſery, when time and days ſhall be no more, I am confident the enſuing Diſcourſe will be grateful and welcome to thee: I make no Apology for its plainneſs, nor am I at all ſolicitous touching the Cenſures I may fall under for publiſhing of it: If thou wilt reade it with an upright Heart, I queſtion not but through a bleſſing from above, it may do thy Soul good: ſure I am, thou wilt find the Argument moſt weighty, and the Concern thereof moſt important: and woe be to that Soul which miſſeth the deſign it tends to, and aims at. When Men come to die, and do find themſelves launching forth into the vaſt Ocean of Eternity, at

leſt when once they find themſelves incircled in that Ocean, *(which quickly they do, when once Death makes its approach) then they ſee that their great Intereſt lay beyond this poor, vain, periſhing World, and the things thereof; then they ſee that their* Great Concern *was to have look'd and liv'd beyond Time and Days, and have made proviſion for an Eternal State; but alas! alas! then 'tis too late: then they cry out,* O Eternity, Eternity! O *miſerable Souls that we are! how did Sin and the World blind and bewitch us, that we could not ere now, when 'tis too late, ſee the weight of an Eternal Intereſt! O blind and brutiſh Creatures, that were taken with carnal and ſenſual things, things pleaſing only to a ſenſual Appetite; and forgot* God, *the chief Good, the things of Heaven, and a bleſſed Eternity, which would have made us happy for ever. Now to prevent theſe doleful Lamentations, and ſuch a diſmal and remedileſs*

dileſs Shipwrack of Eternal Souls, as alſo to ſhew them the path of Life, and to engage them to make ſure of a bleſſed Eternity, while Time and Days laſt, is the deſign of the enſuing Diſcourſe, and of the dying Author in it. And the Lord, the God of all Grace, proſper it in order thereunto. God has kept me for a full half Year by the Graves ſide: one while lifting me up, then caſting me down, and now he ſeems to be ſpeedily finiſhing my days: to whom, through the infinite riches of free Grace, I can with ſome comfort and boldneſs ſay; Come, Lord Jeſus, come quickly. Amen. *And now farewell vain World, farewell Friends and Relations, farewel Eating and Drinklug; and, bleſſed be God, farewel Sin and Sinning; within a few days I ſhall ſin no more, nor ever be in a poſſibility of ſinning, but ſhall be like my Lord, and ſhall ſee him as he is. And, laſtly, farewell Reader.*

E. P.

A Propoſition for the more profitable Improvement of Burials, by giving of Books.

THat great Stupidity that is on the generality of Mankind concerning their Mortality, does manifeſt how needful Books of this Subject are: for although Men know, that by reaſon of the firſt Tranſgreſſion, It is appointed for all Men once to die; Though the Principles of this Natural Life (by which it is upheld) are ſo weak, that they cannot ſupport it long; though there are many Internal Cauſes, that, as ſecret Mines, may ſoon blow up Men, even of the ſtrongeſt Conſtitution; and many External Cauſes, as a Tile from a Houſe, or the ſtumbling of a Horſe, that may ſoon caſt Men into the Grave; though there are continual Repreſentations and Spectacles of Mortality, in which Men, as in a Glaſs, may behold their Natural Face; and though Men always carry about them the ſymptoms of Mortality, and the marks of Death, yet they generally live as if they ſhould never die. In ſmall Villages where inſtances of Mortality are very rare, there, the inward thoughts of their Hearts ſeem to be, that they and their Houſes ſhall continue for ever, and their dwelling-places to all Generations. In populous Towns and Cities, there the commonneſs takes away the ſenſe of Mortality.

And how ſad is it to behold the unſuitable carriage of the generality of Chriſtians at Funerals! thoſe opportunities are uſually ſpent in unprofitable Chat, in Mirth, in Eating and Drinking, and that ſometimes to exceſs: and thus the Houſe of Mourning is turnned into the Houſe of Mirth and Feaſting.

To cure this evil frame, we have thought good to propound that which we find to be the wiſh of the generality of pious Perſons,

viz.

viz. **That Books of this nature may be given at Burials,** *inſtead of* Rings, Gloves, Biskets, Wine, &c. *Reading and Meditation would be much more decent at ſuch ſad Solemnities, than Eating and Drinking, and putting on of Ornaments. Books of this Subject would make People mind the preſent inſtance of Mortality, and affect them with ſuch devout Meditations as this, Lord!* this Tragedy that is now acting on our deceaſed Friend, muſt ere long (*God knows how ſoon*) be acted on us all; our Breath is ready to periſh; the Earth is gaping for us; yet a little while and we ſhall be carried down into the Chambers of Death. *Lord!* Teach us ſo to number our days, that we may apply our Hearts unto true ſaving Wiſdom. *No doubt, much good may redound to the Souls of Men this way; and God be thanked, we can teſtifie, where it has been practiſed, People have been made more ſerious on ſuch ſad occaſions.*

If therefore, Reader, *thou art one of thoſe that deſires to mind thine own Concern, and to ſtir up others to a timely and thorough preparation for Death, we queſtion not but thou wilt approve of, and recommend to others this our* Propoſition: *in which, again, we aſſure thee (however ſome cenſorious Perſons, that take meaſures of us by their own narrow Spirits, may judg) we do not ſo much aim at our own private gain, as the publick good of Chriſtians.*

If Chriſtians are ſo well minded, as to embrace this Propoſition, *we think fit to inſert the names of ſome Books proper for the purpoſe,* viz. *for the poorer ſort, Books of* 6 d. *price.*

The Guide to Heaven.

Bury's Improvement of Death, *&c.*

Books of 1 *s.* price.

Pearſe on Death.
Flavel's Token for Mourners.
Baxter's Now or Never.
Great Aſſize, &c.
Contemplatio Mortis.

Books of 1 *s.* 6 *d.* and 2 *s.*

Dr. *Bates* of final Happineſs.
-----His Treatiſe of Death and Judgment.
Dr. *Patrick*'s Hearts-Eaſe, &c.
-----His Divine Arithmetick.
Baxter of Death and Judgment.
Guide to Eternity.
Mirrour that flatters not.
Drexelius on Eternity.

For the richer ſort, Books of 4, 5, and 6 *s.* price, *viz.*

Drelincourt's Defence againſt the fear of Death.
Taylor's Holy Living and Dying.
How's Bleſſedneſs of the Righteous; *with many others.*

We may ſay of a Book given at Funerals, what the Divine Herbert *ſays of a Verſe*, viz.

A Book may find him, who a Sermon flies,
And turn a Gift into a Sacrifice.

J. Robinſon.
B. Aylmer.

The Author hath alſo publiſhed two other ſmall Treatiſes, *viz.*

The beſt Match; or, the Souls Eſpouſal to Chriſt.

A Beam of Divine Glory; or, a Treatiſe of God's Unchangeableneſs.

THE

THE Great Concern; OR, A PREPARATION FOR DEATH.

Pſalm 39. 13.

O ſpare me, that I may recover ſtrength before I go hence, and be no more.

CHAP. I.

Which contains an Introduction, and an Explication of the Words of the Text, with the general Truth of them, and therein the Foundation of our intended Diſcourſe.

TO walk with God here on Earth, while we live; and to be ready to live with God for ever in Heaven when we come to die, is the great Work we have to do, the great Concern we have to mind, in

our preſent Pilgrimage. To grow great and high in the World, to build our Names and Familes, to live a Life of ſenſual Pleaſures and Delights, ſpending our days in Mirth; theſe are low and mean, poor things; things infinitely beneath the dignity of a Soul, and altogether unworthy of the leaſt of its care and ſolicitude: But to know God, to love God, to obey God, to delight in God, to contemplate the glorious Excellencies and Perfections of God, to live upon God, and to live to God; upon him as our chief Good and Happineſs, and to him as our laſt end, and withal to be found ready at laſt to live with him for ever, to enter upon the beatifical Viſion, and to paſs into that Life of Love and Holineſs, which the Saints and Angels live above, being made perfect in the Viſion and Fruition of the God of Glory; this is truly Noble, this is worthy of the care and ſolicitude of Souls. To promote theſe things, and more eſpecially the latter, is my deſign in fixing my Meditations on this Scripture, which I am the rather induced to do, becauſe I am apprehenſive, that the time of my going hence, when I ſhall be ſeen no more,

more, is drawing very nigh. The words are a holy and prophetical wiſh and deſire, breathed out into the boſom of God by the Man after his own Heart: and that when under ſore and heavy Afflictions: under grievous Sickneſs, ſay ſome: under great Straits and Diſtreſſes, by reaſon of *Abſalom*'s Rebellion and Conſpiracy againſt him, ſay others. In this wiſh or deſire of his, you may note three things.

1. What that is which he wiſheth for, or deſires of God, and that is, ſparing Mercy, *O ſpare me.*

2. The end of this wiſh or deſire of his, and that is, the recovery of ſtrength: *O ſpare me, that I may recover ſtrength.*

3. The ground or motive which induced him to make this deſire for this end, and that was, the near approach of his Death, in theſe words, *Before I go hence, and be no more ſeen.* I will briefly paraphraſe the words for the opening of them, and then give you the Sum of them, as alſo my intendment for them, in one general Poſition.

O ſpare me, that is, ceaſe to ſmite and

afflict

Ceſſa percutere & affligere, &c. Mol. *Leniter mecum age.* Mar. *Abſtule aliquantulum manus tuas à flagellando.* Menoch.

afflict me, give me a little relaxation, a breathing time, ſo one expounds it: Deal gently and mildly with me, ſays another. Withdraw thy hand a little from ſcourging me, and mitigate the violence of my Afflictions, ſay others. *That I may recover ſtrength:* that I may recruit my ſelf a little, ſaith one. That I may have a breathing time before my Death, and being well compoſed, may lay down my Spirit, and commit it into thy hand, ſay others. *That I may grow ſtrong in Grace and Holineſs*, ſay others: That I may finiſh my courſe, and fight a good fight, obtaining the Victory through a happy Death, ſay others. The Sum is, that I may ſet things right in my Soul, and get into a more ready poſture for my Death and Diſſolution, which ſeems to be near at hand. *Before I go hence, and be no more*; that is, before I die, never more to return into this Life, before I quit this World,

Ut reſpirem ante mortem & tranquillus animam meam in manum tuam deponam. Mol.

Antequam morior in hanc vitam nunquam reverſurus, Jun.

World, and bid adieu to this mortal Life, to be no more in the Land of the Living, to be no more in this World, to do any thing for God or my Soul: For (as one well observes) *David* doth not here suppose Death to be the utter end, or annihilation of Man, the putting of a Man out of Being: But his meaning is, if God did still go on to afflict him, as he had done, he must suddenly die, suddenly go off the Stage of this World, and go down to the Bars of Death, to the Gates of the Grave: whereas to any thing that is to be done for God, or a Man's Soul, it is, as if he were out of Being; and where he will be kept for ever from returning any more to this Life, or any opportunity of ever doing any thing for another World. It is a Phrase like to, and of the same importance with that, *Job* 16. 22. Where *Job* speaks of himself. *When a few Years are come; then shall I go the way, whence I shall not return: Not return*, that is, not any more to this Life: not return to do any thing for GOD, or my Soul. The Sum of the whole seems to be thus much; the good Man's Afflictions were

so

so pressing and heavy upon him, that they did ever bow him down to the Grave, and he really looked upon himself as a dying Man, as one going down to the Dust of the Earth: where he knew full well, nothing was to be done for another Life, and from whence there was no return to this Life to be expected any more, and therefore he begs a breathing time, a little space, wherein to recover himself out of all present distempers and discomposures of Heart, and to set all things right in the matter of his Soul: thereby fitting and preparing himself the better for his departure out of this World: he begs a time of respit, wherein to prepare himself, and make ready for a dying hour. This is the Sum of what he drives at, and pleads with God for, according to the Observation, and therein the Sum of my intendment shall be this.

Doct. *That 'tis a very desirable thing; and a business of the highest moment and importance to the Children of Men, to have all things set right, well ordered, and composed in the matters of their Souls, before they*

leave

leave this World; to get all the ſpiritual Concerns of their Souls into the beſt poſture they can, before a dying hour comes.

David, an holy Man, a Man in Covenant with God, yea, *a Man after God's own Heart*, doth yet (you ſee) pray for ſparing Mercy, for a breathing-time, a time of reſpite here in this World before he goeth off the Stage: And why ſo? *That he might recover Strength*, that he might ſet things right in the matters of his Soul; that he might make himſelf more ready, and get his Spiritual Concerns into a better poſture for a dying hour; and this he looked at, and made out after, as that which was moſt deſireable, and of the higheſt importance to him, as indeed 'tis to all. You have a Scripture not unlike to this, Job 10. 20, 21. *Are not my days few? ceaſe then, and let me alone, that I may take comfort a little, before I go, whence I ſhall not return, even to the Land of Darkneſs, and of the ſhadow of Death:* That I may take comfort a little; that I may recover a little, that I may have a breathing-time, that I may recover my

ſelf,

ſelf and gather up my Spirits; ſo I find the Phraſe expounded. He ſeems to deſire a breathing time; the better to compoſe himſelf and the matters of his Soul, for a dying hour. And indeed, 'tis the concern of us all, to ſet all things right in our Souls, and to get into the readieſt poſture, that poſſibly we can, againſt a dying hour comes. I ſhall firſt briefly evince this Truth, and then make ſome practical Improvement of it.

CHAP. II.

Wherein is ſhewn the exceeding great weight of dying Work, and extream difficulty of a dying hour, as the firſt Evidence of our Aſſertion.

DYing Work, my Beloved, is great Work, and a dying hour is a difficult hour; and therefore we had need have all things well ordered, and ready in the matters of our Souls againſt that Time, that Work, that Hour comes. I will lay the weight of dying work, and the difficulty of a dying hour before you in four Propoſitions.

Firſt Propoſition is this (That Death in

it self, and in its own nature, if we look no further) is a very terrible thing; and we had need have all things set right in our Souls, all things in order, when we come to encounter with it: the Philosopher, who look'd not beyound the natural notion of Death, called it πάντων τ φοβερᾶν φοβερώτατον. *Arist.* the most terrible of all terrible things. And in *Job* 18. 14. the Holy Ghost himself calls it, *The King of Terrors: His Confidence* (speaking of a wicked Man) *shall bring him to the King of Terrors, i. e.* to Death, which is most formidable; indeed 'tis therefore called the King of Terrors, because it is the greatest and strongest Terror. And Death must needs be terrible in it self:

1. Because it deprives us of all our sweet Comforts and Enjoyments here in this World, and puts an eternal period to our fruition of them; here we enjoy much good, many streams which run pleasantly on each hand of us (it may be) but when Death comes, that deprives us of all. *Naked came I into the World, and naked shall I return,* Job 1. 21. So the Apostle, *We brought nothing into this World, and it is certain we shall carry nothing out,* speaking as to our outward Comforts here

here, 1 *Tim.* 6. 7. The *Pſalmiſt* to the ſame effect, *Pſal.* 49. 17. ſpeaks of a rich Man; *He ſhall carry nothing away*; *His Glory* (ſaith he) *ſhall not deſcend after him.* Death, as one obſerves, is the greateſt Leveller in the World, it levels Scepters and Plow-ſhares, it makes the Prince as poor as the Peaſant.

2. Becauſe it diſſoves the Union between the Soul and the Body: Death is indeed the rending of Body and Soul, (thoſe old and loving Companions) aſunder. Now all Diſunions, (as a worthy Divine obſerves) are uncomfortable, and ſome Diſunions are terrible: And, as ſome Diſunions are terrible, ſo thoſe are of all others moſt terrible, that do rend them from us which are moſt dear to us. Now what Union ſo near, as that between the Soul and Body? and therefore what Diſunion ſo terrible, as the diſſolution of this Union? The diſſolving the Union between a Man and his Wife is terrible; becauſe they are nearly united each to other: but the diſſolving the Union between Soul and Body, is more terrible, becauſe the Union is more near and cloſe. A Man and his Wife *are one fleſh*: but the Soul and

Body,

Body make but one Person: now Death dissolves this Union. While we live, the Soul dwells in the Body, informs the Body, acts in and by the Body; it hath a great influence upon, and is greatly influenced by the Body: But when Death comes, then the Soul and Body part, till the Resurrection; *one returning to the Dust, whence it came, the other to God who gave it*, Eccles. 12. 7.

3. It is the destroying and demolishing of the Body of Man, that famous and curious Fabrick, and a bringing it into Dust and Putrefaction, *Psal.* 90. 3. It turns a living Body into a dead Carcase, a lifeless lump of Clay, and causeth it to become meat for Worms to feed on, *Job* 19. 26. The Body of Man is a very curious piece of Workmanship, such as wherein the infinite Power and Wisdom of God is much seen and manifested, *Psal.* 139. 14, 15. But when Death comes, it marrs and demolishes all, stains all its Beauty, and draws a Veil upon all its Glory. Sickness often makes a Man's Beauty to *consume away like a Moth*, as you have it, *Psal.* 39. 11. But Death utterly defaces it, and draws a Veil upon it, that turns his Beauty into

to blackneſs and deformity. One of the Ancients, ſtanding by *Cæſar*'s Tomb, wept, ſaying, Where is now the Beauty of *Cæſar?* What now is become of all his Magnificence? In a word, as Life is the ſweeteſt of all outward Mercies, ſo Death is the ſharpeſt of all outward Afflictions: The pains of it are pains to a Proverb: the ſorrows of it are ſorrows to a Proverb: *The ſorrows of Death compaſs me about*, Pſal. 116.3. Now if Death be thus terrible in it ſelf; then judg ye, whether we had not need to have all things ready, and in order when it comes.

Second Propoſition is; That in a dying hour, the Devil is moſt fierce and terrible in his aſſaults and temptations upon the Soul. The Devil is in Scripture called a *Roaring Lion*: And is uſually moſt ſo againſt the poor People of God, when they come to die: *Then he hath wrath, becauſe he knows his time is ſhort.* To allude to that, *Rev.* 12. 12. when a Man or Woman comes to die, the Devil knows he has but a ſhort time to tempt, to vex, to terrifie that Soul in; and therefore then uſually he exerciſes great Wrath; then he ſtirs up all his Wrath, all his Malice, all his Cruelty againſt

gainſt him; he ſees this is the laſt caſt he is like to have for it, the laſt on-ſet he is ever like to make upon the Soul's Faith and Comfort, and that now the Battel is to be won or loſt for ever; therefore now he roars and rages terribly indeed, now he diſcharges all his murdering Pieces againſt the Soul, to make Batteries, if poſſible, upon the Soul's Fort of Salvation, and to ſhake its Foundation of Life and Happineſs. The Devil is the Enemy of Souls, *Mal.* 13. 25. and his Enmity works eſpecially one of theſe two ways; Either firſt to keep them from Life and Happineſs, and here he acts rather like an Angel of Light, than a Roaring Lion: He works rather in a way of Flattery, than in a way of Terror. Hence we read of his *Wiles*, *Methods*, *Devices*, and the like; his cunning and fallacious workings, thereby to deſtroy Souls. Or, ſecondly, to trouble and torment Souls in their way to Life and Happineſs: and here he is indeed like a Roaring Lion, and never more than when we come to die. There are among others two Seaſons, wherein the Devil is moſt fierce and terrible

in

in his assaults upon the Soul. The first is, when a Man is going from Sin to Grace, when he is fully resolved to close with Christ, to shake off the yoke of Sin, and to take upon him the yoke of *Jesus*. The second is, When a Man is going from Grace to Glory: when he is going off the stage of Time to Eternity; when a Man begins to live the Spiritual Life, and when a Man comes to die the Natural Death. I know, first, That as for his own Children, he usually lets them alone, when they come to die: He is afraid to have them disturbed; though sometimes he cannot forbear, but torments them before their time. Secondly, God can, and sometimes does chain him up, so that he shall not be able to trouble and torment the Saints in their passage out of this World: yet still, I say, for the most part he does fiercely assault them then; and doubtless, there are but very few of the Children of God but do meet with very sore assaults from Satan when they come to die; then he turns Accuser; then he charges the Soul with all its Sins; then he tells him he is an Hypocrite, that all his profession hath been nothing but a delusion, and

the like. Now is Satan thus fierce and terrible in his assaults upon the Soul in a dying hour? Surely then we had need have all ready against that hour comes.

3. The third Proposition is this; That in a dying hour Conscience is most awakened; and so most quick and smart in its Threats and Charges against the Soul, if all be not right within; and therefore we had need have all so in that hour. There are three seasons in which Conscience is most awake in the Soul. First, when God begins to deal with the Soul in order to Life and Salvation: then God lets Conscience loose upon a Man. Hence we read of them, that they *were pricked at their heart*, in the sense of Sin: the word is, they were pricked through and through, *Acts* 2. 37. And saith *Paul*, *when Sin revived, I died*, Rom. 7. 9. That is, in the sight of my Sin, which was wrought in me by the Law of God, I was made to see my self lost and miserable, and awakened out of my security. Secondly, When the Soul is under some smart and notable Affliction from the Hand of God: This is evident in that instance of *Joseph*'s Brethren, whose Consciences were awakened,

awakened, when they were in diſtreſs, and charged them with the guilt of their Sin in ſelling their Brother, *Gen.* 42, 21. Thirdly, When a Man comes to die, when the Viſions of Death and the Grave are before him, Oh! you little think how ſtrict Conſcience will be in its ſearch, how ſharp in its charge, and how ſevere in its cenſure in a dying Hour: Then if there be but the leaſt frown in God's Face towards the Soul, the leaſt flaw in his Peace, the leaſt blot or blur in his Evidences for Heaven; if there be but the leaſt ſtain upon the Spirit, the leaſt Sin unpardoned, unrepented of, it is a thouſand to one but Conſcience will take notice of it, and charge the Soul with it. O Sirs, you will find a great deal of difference between Conſcience upon a Bed of Eaſe, and Conſcience upon a Sick-bed; between Conſcience in an hour of Health and worldly Proſperity, and Conſcience in a dying Hour: In the one, great things bear but little weight; but in the other, little things uſually bear great weight in Conſcience: Then the Language of Conſcience to the Soul is, Theſe and theſe things haſt thou done; thus

thus and thus things ſtand with thee; at beſt, Grace is thus and thus weak, Corruptions thus and thus ſtrong, Temptations thus and thus prevalent, the Heart thus and thus out of frame, the Spirit thus and thus alienated from God, and the like: Hence 'tis that at Death there are ſuch Confeſſions, as you have ſometimes from Men and Women, that now they will ſend for ſome godly Miniſter or Chriſtian to pray with them, and for them; though perhaps they could not endure Prayer all their life-time before. Now if in a dying hour, Conſcience be thus quick and ſmart in its threats and charges againſt the Soul; then ſurely we had need, and 'tis greatly our concern, to have all ready, and in order, againſt that hour comes.

The fourth Propoſition is this, That in a dying Hour we ſhall have to do with God, in a very ſtupendious and amazing way, in ſuch a way as may well ſtartle and affright us to think of it: We are ſaid *to have to do with God* here, *Heb.* 4. 13. We have here to do with God in Duties, in Ordinances, in Mercies, in Afflictions: Indeed we had as good never have to do with theſe, un-

 leſs

leſs we have to do with God in theſe; but though we have to do with God here, while we live; yet know, we ſhall have to do with God in another-gueſs way, when we come to die; in ſuch a way as may well overwhelm us to think of it. I ſhall give it you in three ſteps; Then we have to do with God immediately; with God immediately as our Judg, with God immediately as our Judg for Eternity: And O how loud do theſe things call upon us to get all in order in the matters of our Soul, againſt a dying hour comes!

1. When a Man comes to die, he has to do with God immediately; and that is an aſtoniſhing thing. In Death the Body crumbles to duſt; but *the Soul returneth to God who gave it:* So the Holy Ghoſt tells us, *Eccleſ.* 12. 7. The Body, which came from the Duſt, crumbles to Duſt again: but the Soul, that goeth into God's immediate preſence, to deal and to treat with him, as it were face to face: The Soul is always with God, and cannot poſſibly be out of his preſence, *Pſal.* 139. 7. And yet here the Holy Ghoſt tells us, when we die, the Soul returns to God; intimating, that

that then the Soul goes into the immediate preſence of God, and has more immediately to do with him, than here he was ever wont to have; then he beholds his naked Majeſty and Glory. Now what an aſtoniſhing thing is this? You will find (if you obſerve) that the Saints of God, yea the holieſt of them, when they have dealt with God in a more immediate way than ordinary, they have been overwhelmed by it: Take for an inſtance *Daniel*, who, upon receiving Viſions from God, tells us, *there remained no ſtrength in him: That his Comelineſs was turned into Corruption*, Dan. 10. 8. I might inſtance alſo in *John*, who upon a view of, and converſe with Chriſt, that was a little more immediate than ordinary, *fell down at his feet as dead*, Revel. 1. 17. Alſo that of *Jacob*, *I have ſeen the Lord face to face and yet my Life is preſerved*, (ſays he) intimating, it was a wonder that he could ſo immediately ſee God, and live, *Gen.* 32. 10. Now if we are to deal with God immediately, when we come to die, we had need have all in order, before a dying hour comes.

2. When a Man comes to die, he has to do with God immediately, as his Judg; as one that is to try him for his Life; to pass Sentence upon his Soul; to determine his state in Righteousness, measuring out Life or Death, Happiness or Vengeance to him in the other World: And is not this an astonishing and an amazing thing? *Then* (saith *Solomon*, speaking of Death) *shall the Dust return to Earth, as it was, and the Spirit return to God who gave it*, Eccles. 12. 7. At Death the Spirit returns to God; but it is to God, as a Judg, to determine his future Condition for him. *We must all stand before the Judgment-Seat of Christ, and every one must give an account of himself to God:* So the Scripture tells us, *Rom.* 10. 12. And, *It is appointed for all Men once to die, and after that the Judgment*, Heb. 9. 27. When a Man comes to die, that which is immediately before him, is the Judgment of God; the strict, the righteous, the Impartial Judgment of God; then away goes the Soul into the immediate presence of God, as sitting upon a Throne of Judgment, to pass a Sentence of Life, or Death, Salvation, or Damnation, upon him; And

(believe

(believe it) we had need have all things ſet right, and well ordered in our Souls, when we come thus to deal with him: we had need have all things well ordered, and ſet right in the matters of our Souls, when we come to deal with God but as ſitting upon a Throne of Grace; but much more, when we come to deal with him as ſitting upon a Throne of Judgment, to conclude and determine our future Condition, what it ſhall be. Judgment is an aſtoniſhing and terrifying thing; *the hearing of it made* Felix *tremble*, or (as the word is) it turned him into terror or affrightment, *Acts* 24. 25. And the Apoſtle calls it, *the Terror of the Lord*, 2 Cor. 5. 11. Now when a Man comes to die, then he ſays, or may ſay; Now I am to deal with the Great God, the Judg of all; Now I muſt appear before his righteous Tribunal, and have the ſtate of my Soul determined for Life or Death, Salvation or Damnation in the other World. O how great a thing is this!

3. When a Man comes to die, he has to do with God immediately, as his Judg for Eternity: and this ſpeaks it yet more terrifying and aſtoniſhing:

For though a Man is then to deal with God immediately, and that as his Judg too; yet if it were but for a time, for ſome ſhort term of years, it would not be altogether ſuch a terrifying and amazing thing: but alas! it is for Eternity; and therefore his Judgment is called *Eternal Judgment*, Heb. 6. 2. Hence *Auſtin*, ſpeaking of Death, calls it *Oſtium Æternitatis*, the Gate of Eternity, *i. e.* the Gate or Door that lets Men out into Eternity; an Eternity of Life, or Death, Salvation, or Damnation; the Sentence which God will then paſs upon the Soul, will be an eternal Sentence; and the Soul muſt be eternally under the execution of it, whether it be for Life, or Death, Salvation, or Damnation. When a Man comes to die, he then ſees himſelf launching forth into the great Ocean of Eternity; he ſee his eternal All to be immediately at ſtake, and his eternal ſtate to be immediately determined by the Great and Holy God: Now he ſees he muſt ſhoot the Great Gulf, and take up his abode in the Eternal Region: This fills him with amazement. O now, ſays he, a Sentence muſt paſs upon me once for all;

all; now I muſt ſhoot the Great Gulf; now I muſt launch forth into the great Ocean, where neither Bounds, nor Bottom is to be found for ever: Now I muſt enter upon Eternal Joys, or Eternal Flames; an endleſs Life, either with God or Devils, in Heaven or Hell: Now I ſhall find Infiniteneſs and Eternity combine to do their utmoſt, to make me happy, or miſerable for ever: Now I muſt become the immediate object either of infinite Wrath, or infinite Love, infinite Hatred, or infinite Delight, and that for ever. Now I muſt hear from God, either, *Come, thou bleſſed*, or, *Depart, thou curſed*, and that for ever: And O what an aſtoniſhing thing is this! O Eternity, Eternity! O vaſt Eternity! O great Eternity! O boundleſs Eternity! One ſerious view of it is enough to amaze a poor Soul, looking upon it at a diſtance: But how much more amazing muſt it needs be, when it ſhall be immediately before the Soul, and he ſees he muſt enter upon it the next hour? O then it will be amazing indeed, aſtoniſhing indeed! This one thing Eternity, puts infinite ſweetneſs into Mercies, and infinite bitterneſs into

Sufferings: the thoughts of this was that which did so much amaze that good Man, who sitting in a deep Muse a long time, and being asked the reason of it, was silent, and being asked again and again, at length broke out into these words; *For ever, for ever, for ever, for ever*, and for near a quarter of an hour together spake nothing else: thereby telling them that asked him, that it was the thoughts of this same *for ever*, that so much amused him. And if you were more in the thoughts of the weight of Eternity, you would see it were an astonishing thing indeed: And this is that which makes dying work such a weighty work, and a dying hour such a difficult hour. I will close this Head, and with that, this demonstration, with a saying I have read in one of the Ancients; *That is not to be accounted* (says he) *an evil Death, which has had a good Life preceding it; nor doth any thing make Death terrible, but that which follows Death: therefore they which must necessarily die, are not much to concern themselves, what falls out to cause Death, but whither by Death they are constrained to go, whither Death carries them.* It is a great saying,

and

and indeed 'tis no great matter, when we die, or how we die, or what is the occaſion of our Death: But it is whither Death carries us, and where Death ſets us down; whether in a bleſſed or wretched Eternity; whether with God or Devils; in Heaven, or Hell? Well then, if Death be thus terrible in its own nature: If in a dying hour the Devil be ſo fierce and terrible in his aſſaults upon Souls; if Conſcience be ſo awakened and ſmart in its Charges aud Accuſations; if then we muſt have to do with God immediately, and as our Judg, yea, as our Judg for Eternity, as one that will determine the Eternal Condition of our Souls, in unſpeakable Happineſs, or unſpeakable Miſery; then ſurely dying work is great work, and a dying hour is a difficult hour: It then greatly concerns us to have all ready, and all in order, in the matters of our Souls, againſt the time thereof comes.

CHAP. III.

Which ſheweth the Glory, Sweetneſs, and Bleſſedneſs of the attainment of having all things ſet right in the matters of our Souls, before a dying hour comes, which will further evince the truth aſſerted.

AS dying work is weighty work, and a dying hour is a difficult hour; ſo to have all things ſet right, all well ordered and compoſed in the matters of our Souls, againſt ſuch an hour comes, is an high, a ſweet, a bleſſed Attainment, an Attainment which carries infinite ſweetneſs and deſirableneſs in it. A taſte of which I ſhall give you in two things only. (1) Hereby we come to be glorious Conquerours over Death and the Grave. (2.) Hereby we come to have abundant entrance miniſtred to us into Heaven and Glory. And, my Beloved, what more ſweet and deſirable than this? Surely this ſpeaks it to be a very ſweet and bleſſed Attainment.

1. Hereby we come to be glorious Conquerours over Death and the Gave. Death is an Enemy, 'tis the laſt Enemy

the

the Children of God have to grapple and conflict with: *The laſt Enemy that is to be deſtroyed is Death*, 1 Cor. 15. 26. And being the laſt Enemy, in conquering this, they conquer all; conquering this, they are compleat and Eternal Conquerours. Now, by having all things ſet right in the matters of our Souls, all things ready, and in order for a dying hour, we come to conquer this laſt Enemy; yea, to get a glorious conqueſt over it: Hereby *Death comes to be ſwallowed up of Victory*, as you have the expreſſion, 1 *Cor.* 15. 54. Hereby *we are more than Conquerours over it*, Rom. 8. 37. Take the Conqueſt which this gives us over Death, in theſe three things.

1. Hereby the Soul is carried above the fear of Death: In *Heb.* 2. 15. We read of ſome, *Who all their life-time were ſubject to bondage through fear of Death:* And, if in their life-time, much more when they come to a dying hour; Then Conſcience (as you have heard) is more awake: Oh the Fears, the Terrors, the Hell upon Earth, that the ſight of Death's approach fills many a poor Soul withal! But now take a Soul that has all things right, and in order in his

ſpiritual

ſpiritual Concerns, and he is carried above the fear of this King of Terrors; and that when made as terrible, as the wit and malice of Man can poſſibly make it: He can converſe with his laſt Enemy as one that has loſt his ſting and power, and ſo without the leaſt fear or diſmayedneſs of Spirit: *None of theſe things move me*, ſays *Paul*, *neither count I my Life dear unto my ſelf, that I may finiſh my Courſe with Joy.* His Afflictions did not move him, did not terrify him. But if Death ſhould come, what then? Why that ſhall be welcome too, ſaith he, *Acts* 20. 24. Who is afraid of a conquered Enemy, an Enemy which a Man ſeeth dead and ſlain in the Field? One that has all things ready for a dying hour, he ſees Death to be a conquered Enemy, an Enemy conquered by the Death of Chriſt; and ſo is carried above the fear of it.

2. Hereby the Soul is inabled in a holy manner to triumph over Death, and even to ſcorn and contemn it; which is an higher Conqueſt ſtill. A Man that has all things ſet right, and well ordered in the matters of his Soul, he is not only carried above the fear of Death; but he rides in triumph over

over it, as one that divideth the ſpoil: He can then with Boldneſs and Comfort challenge this laſt Enemy of his, and even dare it to do his worſt to him: *O Death, where is thy Sting? O Grave, where is thy Victory?* (ſaith the Apoſtle.) *The ſting of Death is Sin, the ſtrength of Sin is the Law: But thanks be to God, who giveth us the Victory through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, 1 Cor. 15. 55, 56, 57. As if he ſhould ſay, Death, you talk of a Sting; but where is it? Grave, you would threaten us with Victory and Overthrow; but do your worſt, Conquer us if you can. As a Man that has diſarmed his Enemy, thrown him upon his back, and ſays to him; O Sir, where is your Sword? Where is your Piſtol? Wheire is the Execution you threatned? Do your worſt.

3. Hereby the Soul comes to be able ſolemnly to chooſe and deſire Death; yea, very much to exult, and rejoyce in Death; as that which of an Enemy is become a Friend, and an In-let into all Happineſs to him. So 2 *Cor.* 5. 5, 6, 8. *Now he that hath wrought us for the ſelf-ſame thing, is God, who hath al-*

ſo

ſo given unto us the earneſt of his Spirit: Therefore we are always confident, knowing that whilſt we are at home in the Body, we are abſent from the Lord; We are confident, I ſay, *and willing rather to be abſent from the Body, and to be preſent with the Lord.* So Phil. 1. 22, 23. *But if I live in the fleſh, this is the Fruit of my Labour; yet what I ſhall chooſe, I wot not; for I am in a ſtrait betwixt two, having a deſire to depart, and to be with Chriſt, which is far better.*

Mark, He deſires Death, he chooſes Death, as that which is a Friend to him, and an Inlet into his Happineſs. Such an one can ſay, as I have read a *German* Divine did, when dying; 'I am 'ready (ſay he) and deſire to be gone 'out of this Life, in which all things 'are not only full of Miſeries and 'Calamities; but which is to be la-'mented, all things are full fraught with 'Sins: I ſay, I deſire to paſs into that 'Life in which there is no Sin, no Mi-'ſery. Yea, more, ſuch an one can exult, and rejoyce in Death. *Luke* 2. 29, 30. *Lord, now letteſt thou thy Servant depart in Peace, according to thy Word; for mine Eyes have ſeen thy Salvation.*

They

They are words of joy and exultation in the ſight of Death's approach. The Child of ſome tender and indulgent Father, being abroad at ſojourn, and ſeeing a Meſſenger come from his Father to fetch him home; how does he exult and rejoyce? O (ſays he) my Father hath ſent for me home! now I muſt go live with my Father, to eat and drink at my Father's Table, to live in my Father's prefence, enjoy my Father's Love and Counſels! And this he rejoyces in, and exultingly embraces the Meſſenger. 'Tis the very caſe here, the Soul having all things ready, all things ſet right within, when Death comes, 'tis but as a Meſſenger to him, to fetch him home to his Father's Houſe, which he can welcome and embrace with Joy. O (ſays he) my Father has ſent for me home, home to Heaven, there to live immediately in his Preſence, and upon his Fulneſs; and now I ſhall be for ever with my Father; now I ſhall for ever feaſt my Soul with my Father's Love, and the conſtant view of my Father's Face: Now I ſhall *ſee him Face to Face*, whom here I could never *ſee, but through a Glaſs darkly*: Now I

ſhall

ſhall ſee and be for ever in the embraces of my ſweet Lord; my Lord that bled for me, that died for, that *trod the Winepreſs alone for me*; now ſhall I enter into the *Glorious Liberty of the Children of God:* I have hitherto been in bondage, in bondage to Satan, in bondage to my own Heart, which has all along wretchedly impoſed upon me; but now I ſhall enter upon the Glorious Liberty of the Children of God: Now I ſhall *partake of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light:* Now I ſhall bathe my Soul in the Chriſtal ſtreams of undefiled Pleaſures, running freſh along the Banks of Eternity at my Father's right Hand: Now I ſhall ſpend a whole Eternity in Praiſes, Doxologies, and Hallelujah's to God and the Lamb: Now I ſhall have all my Spots and Wrinkles, my Sins and Sorrows done away at once: Now ſhall I ſigh no more, and, which is infinitely better, I ſhall ſin no more for ever; no more complain of dark Viſions, and ſhort viſits from God; no more complain of diſtances and alienation between Him and my Soul for ever: There ſhall be no more interruption of Communion with my ſweet Saviour; but I ſhall

ſtand

ſtand in his Preſence, and behold his Face for evermore. In a word, hereby Death, the King of Terrors becomes the King of Comforts to the Soul; and a Man comes to die both happily and comfortably. Some Men die neither happily, nor comfortably; and ſuch is the caſe of all who die out of Chriſt; they die in their Sins, they die to be damned for ever. Some die happily, but not comfortably; ſuch is the caſe of poor Chriſtians dying under deſertion, whoſe Sun ſets in a Cloud; they die in the dark, not knowing what ſhall become of their Souls to Eternity, which yet go ſafe to Heaven, being built upon the Rock of Ages, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Some die both happily and comfortably; ſuch is the caſe of all thoſe who have all things ſet right between God and them, all things ready, and in order, before a dying hour comes. Some die preſumptuouſly, thinking all is right and well in the matters of their Souls, when indeed nothing is ſo; that is ſad for Eternity: The Lord deliver your Souls and mine from ſuch an *Exit*. Some die tremblingly or doubtingly, not knowing how things are with them, whether well or ill, but they fear ill;

that

that is ſad, at leaſt for time; The Lord carry us above ſuch an *Exit*. Some (*viz.* well ordered Souls) die fiducially, knowing things to be right between God and them; and that is comfortable both for Time and Eternity. Well then, if hereby we come to have ſuch a glorious Victory over Death and the Grave, it muſt then be a great Attainment to have all things in order between God and us; and conſequently greatly our concern to have things ſo.

2. Hereby we come to have a rich and glorious entrance miniſtred to us into everlaſting Life, and Glory, into Heaven and Bleſſedneſs. As hereby we come to be Glorious Conquerours over the natural Death; ſo hereby we come to have a rich and glorious Entrance miniſtred to us into the Eternal Life. Which alſo carries much ſweetneſs and bleſſedneſs in it, 2 *Pet.* 1. 5, 11. *And beſides this, giving all diligence add to your Faith Vertue, and to Vertue Knowledg*, &c. That is, grow as compleat in Grace as poſſibly you can, make ſure of your Salvation, make all ready in the matters of your Souls: And what then? *So an entrance ſhall be miniſtred to you abundantly into the Ever-*

Everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And is not this a blessed Attainment? Take this in three things.

1. Hereby the Soul comes to enjoy much of Heaven here upon Earth; much of Blessedness and Glory, whilst on this side Blessedness and Glory; then hath a Man an abundant entrance ministred unto him into Heaven and Glory, when he hath much of Heaven and Glory given out to him here on Earth, large earnest, and First-fruits: And this the Soul has, that hath all things right in the matters of his spiritual state, all things ready and in order within. Hence we read sometimes of the *Earnest*, sometimes of the *First-Fruits of the Spirit*, Ephes. 1. 14. Rom. 8. 28. And the Soul that is most ready, has the greatest Earnest and First-fruits; that is to say, the greatest beginnings of Heaven here upon Earth: For that which makes us ready for a dying hour, is something of Heaven dropp'd into the Soul here.

2. Hereby he comes to go triumphingly from Earth to Heaven, to go to Heaven and Glory with a Crown upon his Head; and is not this a sweet Attainment? Then hath a Man an abundant

entrance

entrance into Heaven, and Glory when he goes triumphingly thither: When a Man passes to Heaven and Glory, with visions thereof in his Eye, and prelibations thereof in his Soul, with a clear witness and evidence in his Spirit, that he is going to possess the fulness thereof with God and Christ for ever: When a Man enters into Life without any rebukes from God, or his own Conscience; without any stumbling through doubting or unbelief: This is the happiness of such as have all things well in their Souls before a dying hour comes. It is with such in Death, as it was with *John* in a Vision, *Rev.* 4. 1. They (as it were) hear a Voice from Heaven, saying, *Come up hither*, and immediately they are in the Spirit. Some poor Souls croud into Heaven through a throng of doubts and unbelief, difficulties and despondencies, through many fears and temptations; insomuch that it might be truly said of them, that they are *scarcely saved*, as the Apostle's expression is; but others go through none of these; they go triumphingly, with a Crown upon their Heads, as it were. So *Paul*, 2 Tim. 4. 6, 7, 8. *I am now ready to be offered, and*

and the time of my departure is at hand; I have fought a good Fight, I have finiſhed my courſe, I have kept the Faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteouſneſs, which the Lord, the Righteous Judg ſhall give me at that Day; and not unto me only, but unto all them alſo that love his Appearing. Me-thinks I ſee how his Holy Soul went triumphingly to the Throne of God, and the Lamb. When *David and the Houſe of* Iſrael *brought up the Ark of the Lord, it was with ſhouting, and with the ſound of the Trumpet:* So when ſuch a Soul goes to Reſt, 'tis with a kind of ſhouting and triumph among the Saints themſelves, who all reach the ſame Heaven and Glory at laſt. There's a very great deal of difference in their Death, and in their going to that Heaven and Glory. As, you know, two Ships may arrive at the ſame Harbour, yet with much difference, as to the manner of their coming in: The one makes a ſhift to get in, but 'tis with her Anchors loſt, her Sails torn and rent, her Flags down, her Maſts broken, and the like: but the other comes in bravely, riding as it were in Triumph, with her Sails ſpread, her Anchors ſafe, her

Flag

Flags flying, her Trumpets ſounding, and her Marriners ſhouting. So great a difference there is in the paſſing of Saints to Heaven and Bleſſedneſs: Now what an Attainment muſt it be to go with ſhouting and Triumph.

3. Hereby the Soul comes to be admitted to, and inveſted with an eminent fulneſs of Bleſſedneſs and Glory with God for ever. Then has a Man an abundant entrance into Heaven and Glory, when he is admitted to, and inveſted with an eminent fulneſs of Glory and Bleſſedneſs in Heaven for ever; and this he hath who has all right and ready in the Concerns of his Soul, when he comes to die: Such a one receives a full reward, as the expreſſion is, 2 *Epiſt. John* 8. and *has much Fruit abounding to his account*. Phil. 4. 7. And Oh what a ſweet and bleſſed Attainment does this ſpeak it to be, to have all in order againſt a dying hour comes? Now if it be ſuch an Attainment to have things ſet right, and in order in our Souls againſt a dying hour, then ſurely it muſt needs be highly our Concern to have all things ſo.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Which ſhewes the State of Men and Women under Death, as a further evidence of our Aſſertion.

AS to have all things ready, and in order, when a dying hour comes, is an high and glorious Attainment; ſo ſuch is the ſtate and condition of Men and Women under Death, that it cannot but be highly their concern to have all things ſet right, all things ready in the matters of their Souls, when they come to die. This I will ſet before you in three Propoſitions.

Firſt Propoſition is this: *That ſuch is the ſtate and condition of Men and Women under Death, that there is no return for them into this Life any more for ever.* When once a Man's Sun is ſet, it never riſes more: when once a Man has his *Exit*, is gone off the Stage of this World, he never enters more; there is no more any Part to be acted here by him. This you have in the Text: *Before I go hence and be no more*; that is is, no more in this World.

So

So *Job* 7. 7, 8, 9, 10. *O remember that my Life is Wind, my Eye shall no more see Good: The Eye of him that hath seen me, shall see me no more: Thine Eyes are upon me, and I am not. As the Cloud is consumed and vanisheth away; so he that goeth down to the Grave, shall come up no more. He shall return no more to his House, and his place shall know him no more.*

Again, Job 10. 20, 21. *Are not my Days few? Cease then, and let me alone, that I may take comfort a little, before I go whence I shall not return, even into the Land of darkness, and the shaddow of Death.* And again, *Chron.* 16. 22. *When a few days are come, then shall I go the way whence I shall not return.* All shewing, that when a Man is once gone off the Stage of this World, there is no return for him any more.

Second Proposition is this; *That such is the State of Men and Women under Death, that there is nothing to be done for their Souls; there is nothing to be mended that is amiss, nothing to be set in order that shall be found out of order.* Death (my Beloved) is not the time of working, but of receiving the reward of our

work;

work: Death leaves us under an utter and eternal impoſſibility of ever doing any thing for another World; Therefore *whatſoever thine hand findeth to do,* (ſaith *Solomon*) *do it with all thy might! for there is no Work nor Counſel in the Grave whither thou goeſt,* Eccle. 9. 10. And, *I muſt work the Works of him that ſent me, while it is day; becauſe the night cometh, when no Man can work,* ſaith Chriſt, *John* 9. 4. Death is a ſtate of darkneſs, and it deprives us of all helps, advantages and opportunities of ever doing any thing for the good of our Souls: There is no repenting, no believing, no turning to God in the Grave. There is no aſſuring Pardon of Sin no getting an Intereſt in Jeſus Chriſt; no making our Calling and Election ſure there: O no! theſe things muſt be done now, or they can never be done; and if they be never done, our Souls are for ever undone. 'Twas an Epicurean ſaying of him, who ſaid, *Eat, Drink, Play; for after Death there is no pleaſure:* But it would be a Chriſtian ſaying, to ſay to you, and my own Soul, Love God, Pray to him, ſeek his Face, repent, believe, make ſure of Chriſt;

for after Death none of these are to be done: They must be done here, or never.

Third Proposition is this, *That such is the state of Men and Women under Death, that the Soul is actually and irreversibly stated and concluded in its Eternal Condition: The Souls Eternal State is absolutely fixed, and unchangeably determined, without any alteration for ever.* 'Tis an Observation among the School-Men, that look what befel the Angels that sinned, that in Death befalls wicked Men, those that are not ready for a dying hour: The Angels immediately upon their sinning, were stated in an irreversible condition of Wo and Misery: And wicked Men, unready Souls, immediately upon Death, are irreversibly stated in a like Eternal Condition; they are eternally sealed up under Damnation: and the Devils may as soon get out of those Chains of Eternal Darkness, whereinto they are cast, and in which they are locked up, being reserved unto Judgment; as such Persons can change, or reverse that Condition. The truth is, Death, whenever, or where-ever it comes, is as determining thing, it concludes the

the Soul for ever under an unalterable ſtate of Life or Death, of Happineſs or Miſery; for, *as the Tree falls ſo it lies*, Eccleſ. 11. 3. Hence in Death, *the Spirit*, the Soul is ſaid *to return to God*, Eccleſ. 12. 7. Upon which a Learned Man has this Obſervation; *God* (ſaith he) *receives the Soul of Man, when he dies, to himſelf; and having received it, he delivers it either to the Holy Angels, that by them it might be carried to Heaven, if it hath been holy and good; or he delivers it to the evil Angels, by them to be dragged into Hell, if it hath been ungodly.* Hence the *Apoſtle* tells us, *after Death comes Judgment*, Heb. 9. 27. By which is meant the particular Judgment of every Man and Woman immediately upon Death; which is nothing elſe but the ſtating of the Soul in an Eternal Condition. Hence alſo, when *Dives* is brought in, deſiring that *Lazarus* might *dip the tip of his Finger in Water to cool his Tongue*; anſwer is made, That it cannot be, for as much as there is no going for any, either from Hell to Heaven, or from Heaven to Hell, becauſe *there is a Gulf fixed*, Luke 16. 26. Noting the unalterableneſs of that ſtate which Death ſets Men down in,

whether of Happineſs, or Miſery. Well then, if ſuch be the ſtate of Men and Women under Death, as we have heard, then ſurely 'tis highly our concernment to have all ready, all in order againſt a dying hour comes. Having given you thus briefly the demonſtration of the Point, I ſhall make ſome practical improvement of it.

CHAP. V.

Wherein Sinners are convinced of their Sin and Folly in their neglect of this Concern: with ſix weighty Pleas or Arguments, to ſet home this Conviction, and awaken them to their Work.

AND is this indeed a Concern of ſo much weight and moment to us? Then how great is their Folly, and what Enemies are they to their own Souls, who live in the neglect of this great Buſineſs and Concern? (which the moſt of Men do.) God is pleaſed to ſpare, yea, wonderfully to ſpare them for Days, for Weeks, for Months, for Years together,

and

and that for this very end, that they ſhould make themſelves ready, and ſet all right in the matters of their Souls, againſt a dying hour comes: But, woe, and alas for them! This they mind not, this they concern not themſelves about, but inconſiderately live in a total neglect thereof; than which, what greater Folly can they be guilty of? Pray mind what God himſelf ſpeaks in this caſe, *Deut.* 32. 28, 29. Where he ſaith concerning *Iſrael*, *They were a Nation void of Counſel, nor was there any underſtanding in them.* And what then? *O that they were wiſe, that they underſtood this; that they would conſider their latter end.* Obſerve here two things atteſted and verified by God himſelf. (Firſt) That 'tis a point of the higheſt Wiſdom the Sons of Men are capable of, ſeriouſly to conſider their latter end; that is, to prepare for Death, and to ſet all things right in the matters of their Souls, ſo as that things may iſſue well with them at laſt, and they may go off the ſtage of this World with Comfort. (Secondly) That not to do this, is a point of the greateſt Folly: It doth evidently argue Men to

be void of Counsel; and all true understanding: it would have been their Wisdom to have considered their latter end; and their not doing of it, argued them to be guilty of notorious Folly: These things you may see, God himself attests and verifies here. And my Beloved, what greater folly can there be, then for a Man to live in the neglect of that which is of so much weight and importance for him to mind, as this is? Surely the greater the concern is, the greater must our folly be in the neglect thereof: Yet this is the folly that the most of Men are guilty of; they mind not their latter end, their dying hour; at least not so, as to make a timely provision for it. God letteth them live many years, and perhaps they rejoyce in them all; but they forget the days of darkness, which are many: They regard not the state of their Souls, nor how things stand between God and them, in reference to another World: And O that this were not the folly of too many of us, who profess the belief of another Life, a future state: *We live and enjoy good, but we put far from us the evil day*, as those

are

are ſaid to do, *Amos* 6. 3. God ſpares us time after time, but no proviſion do we make for a dying hour. O how many of us have never yet ſet any thing right in the matters of our Souls, any thing in order againſt the time comes when we are to go hence, and be no more; that have ſcarce ever had yet one ſerious thought of Death, Judgment, or Eternity, nor made the leaſt tittle of proviſion for them? and what ſhall I ſay to ſuch? I would (if God ſaw good) awaken them out of their folly, and convince them of it: in order to which, I would plead a little with them in five or ſix particulars.

1. Muſt we not all go hence? *Solomon* tells us, *there is a time to be born, and a time to die*, Eccleſ. 3. 2. And the one is as ſure as the other; as ſure as we have had a time to be born, ſo ſure we ſhall have a time to die, and the living know it: *The living know that they ſhall die*, (ſaith *Solomon*) Eccleſ. 9. 5. Indeed they may well know it: For not only the experience of between five and ſix thouſand years tells them ſo, but it is what is appointed, what is infallibly determined by the unchangeable Law,

and Decree of Heaven, *Heb.* 9. 27. nor can any thing whatever exemept us from the ſtroke of Death.

1. Youthful Strength and Vigour can't do it: For young Men die as well as old; ſtrong Men die as well as weak. *One dieth in his full ſtrength*, (ſaith the Holy Ghoſt) *being wholly at eaſe and quiet, his Breaſts are full of Milk, and his Bones are moiſtened with Marrow*, Job 21. 23, 24.

2. Worldly Pomp and Greatneſs can't do it: For great Men die as well as mean Men; rich Men die as well as poor Men. *Where is the Houſe of the Prince?* (ſaith the Holy Ghoſt) Anſwer is made, *He ſhall be brought to the Grave, and ſhall remain in the Tomb, the Clods of the Valley ſhall be ſweet unto him, and every Man ſhall draw after him, as there is innumerable before him*, Job 21. 28, 32, 33. So in the 49 Pſalm, 16, 17, 18, 19. *Be not thou afraid when one is made rich, when the Glory of his Houſe is increaſed: For when he dieth, he ſhall carry nothing away, his Glory ſhall not deſcend after him; though while he lived, he bleſſed his Soul*, and the like; *he ſhall go to the Generation of his Fathers, he ſhall never ſee Light.*

3. Humane

3. Humane Wisdom and Policy can't do it; for Wise Men die as well as Fools. So *Psal.* 49. 10. *Wise Men die; likewise the Fool*; yea, in many respects, *Wise Men die as the Fool*, Eccles. 2. 16. Pray what is become of all the wise Men, and great Politicians that have lived in former Ages? truly the clods of the Valley cover them.

4. Spiritual Gifts and Graces can't do it: for good Men die as well as bad; holy Men as well as wicked Men: *The Righteous Man perisheth, and no Man layeth it to Heart; and merciful Men are taken away*, Isa. 57. 1.

5. Eminency of Place and Service can't do it: *Your Fathers, where are they? And the Prophets, do they live for ever?* Zech. 1. 5. What higher place, than to be a Prophet, to be an Ambassador for God? and yet such die. Nothing (you see) can exempt us from the stroak of Death: Why then should we neglect to prepare for it? I will close this Head with a saying I have read in one of the Ancients, *What among human affairs*, says he, *is more certain than Death? what more uncertain than the hour of Death? Death compassionatesnot poverty, it reverences not either the*

greatneſs, it ſpares no Sex, no Manners, no Age, only it ſeems to come in at the gate upon old Men; but craftily it ſteals in upon young ones.

2. Does not Death haſten upon us all? As we muſt all die, ſo Death haſtens apace upon us; Every ſtep we take is a ſtep towards Death and the Grave: So we find, *Eccleſ.* 9. 10. *Our whole Life is* (as one well obſerves upon that place) *nothing elſe but a journey towards Death and the Grave*; whether we ſleep or wake, eat or drink, trade or travel, pray or play, we are ſtill haſting to the Grave: a dying hour haſtens upon us all; and how faſt (pray) does it haſten upon us? Faſter than the Weavers Shuttle does to the end of the Web. *My days* (ſaith *Job*) *are ſwifter than a Weavers Shuttle*, Job 7. 6. How faſt does it haſten upon us? As faſt, yea faſter than a Poſt haſtens to the end of his Stage, or a ſwift Ship to the Harbour, under the advantage of Wind and Tide; or the ſwift flying Eagle to the prey. *My days are ſwifter than a Poſt* (ſaith *Job*) *they flee away, they ſee no good: They are paſſed away as the ſwift Ship; as the Eagle haſteneth to the prey*, Job 9. 25, 26. How

faſt

fast does it hasten upon us? So fast, as that for ought we know, it will be upon us before we see the light of another day. *Thou fool, this night thy Soul shall be required of thee*, Luke 10. 20. How fast does it hasten upon us? So fast, as that for ought we know, it may be upon us the next hour, yea, the next moment: *They spend their days in mirth, and in a moment go down to the Grave*, Job 21. 13. To be sure it will be upon us speedily, and it may be upon us suddenly. I pray consider, what are we? and what is our Life? Wind: *Job* 7. 7. *O remember that my Life is Wind:* An Hands-breadth, *Psal.* 39. 5. *Behold thou hast made my days as an hands-breadth, mine Age is as nothing before thee.* A declining shadow, *Psal.* 102. 11. *My days are like a shadow that declineth, and I am withered like grass:* A Flower of the field which is withered, and gone with the Wind: *As for Man his days are as Grass, as a Flower of the Field, the Wind passeth over it, and it is gone, and the place thereof knoweth it no more*, Psal. 103. 15, 16. And again, *All Flesh is Grass, and the goodlinss thereof as the flower of the field, the grass withereth, the*

flow-

Flower fadeth; because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: Surely the People is Graſs, Iſa. 40. 6, 7. Vanity and a ſhadow: *Man is like to Vanity, his days are as a ſhadow that paſſeth away*, Pſal. 144. 4. *A Vapour which appeareth for a little ſeaſon, and is gone*, Jam. 4. 14. O how ſoon may one, or another, or all of us, be among the Dead? how ſoon may Death approach us?

3. What infinite Mercy is it, that God hath ſpared us thus long, and ſtill does ſpare us to ſet all things right, to make all ready for a dying hour? O my Brethren, how great is the ſparing Mercy of God towards us? We have had ſome ten, ſome twenty, ſome thirty, ſome forty, ſome fifty, ſome ſixty years in the World; and ſtill God ſpares us; ſtill he lets us live and enjoy good: And why all this, think you? Surely to ſet things right in our Souls, to make ready for a dying hour, and ſhall we yet neglect it? God forbid. O Sirs, think a little, I beſeech you with your ſelves, How long ſince the Grave might have ſwallowed us up, and the bottomleſs Pit have ſhut its Mouth upon us? How long ſince might Time and Days have been at an

end

end with us, and our Souls ſtated in a miſerable Eternity? But ſtill God ſpares us, and we are yet in the Land of the Living, with a door of Mercy and Grace yet open unto us; at leaſt a poſſibility left us of knowing the things of our Peace in our day, of making proviſions for Death and Eternity: And O what Mercy is this! I would fain a little quicken both you and my ſelf by this Conſideration: And in order thereunto, let me plead a little particularly with you.

1. Conſider how long God hath ſpared, and does ſpare you, beyond what he does and has thouſands, and ten thouſands of others: God does not ſpare all at that rate, which he has ſpared, and does ſtill ſpare us: Alas! how many thouſands are there now frec among the Dead, who came into being long ſince we did? Their Glaſs is run, their Sun is ſet, their Day is over, their Hopes and Expectations are all at an end: their Souls are ſtated in an Eternal Condition, a Condition that will admit of neither change nor period for ever; and yet we are ſpared ſtill: they came into the World long after us, and are gone into Eterni-

ty

ty long before us: Yea, how many are there, that never arrived to the one half of those years that we have arrived unto? their Sun hath set in the Morning: How many of us have out-lived our Yoke-fellows, our Children, our Servants, our Friends and Acquaintance? And yet we ſtand our ground: and all this that we might prepare for a dying hour: *This Patience of God ſhould lead us to Repentance*, Rom. 2. 5. And O that it might ſo do.

2. Conſider how much we have provoked God, and what advantage we have given him in Juſtice againſt us: I would ſay here, as Chriſt ſpeakes in another caſe, *Luke* 13. 2. *Suppoſe ye that thoſe* Galileans (*whoſe Blood* Pilate *mingled with their Sacrifices*) *were Sinners above all the* Galileans, *becauſe they ſuffered ſuch things? I tell you, nay; but except ye repent, ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh: Or thoſe eighteen upon whom the Tower of* Siloah *fell, and ſlew them, think ye they were Sinners above all Men that dwelt in* Jeruſalem; *I tell you, nay; but except ye repent, ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh.* So ſay I here, Suppoſe ye that thoſe that are gone down to the gates of the Grave, and

the

the bars of Death, before us, were greater Sinners than we? I tell you, nay; *but except we repent, we must all likewise perish.* We have sinned as well as they, and possibly in many regards more than they: To be sure, we have all over and over deserved long since to have been covered with the shadow of the Night of Eternal Darkness. O how hath the Patience of God been tried, and his Long-sufferings put to it by us! What burden have we been to his Soul! Some of us have cause to think, that we have been as great a burden to God, as most that ever lived: How justly may the blessed God complain of many of us, *That we have made him to serve with our Sins, and wearied him with our Iniquities*, as he did them of old? *Isa.* 43. 24. *That we have broke his Heart with our whorish Heart, whereby we have departed from him*, Ezek. 6. 9. *That our Sins have pressed him down, as a Cart is pressed that is full of Sheaves*, *Amos* 2. 13. Alas, alas! how have we wallowed in our Pollutions, and acted out the Enmity and Rebellion of our natures against him? How have we rejected his Word, resisted his Spirit, despised his Grace, trampled upon his Son,

refused

refuſed many and many an offer of Love, and many a ſweet Call, and a bleſſed Invitation, to come to the Marriage-ſupper of the Lamb? And yet that he ſhould ſtill ſpare us: O what Mercy is this? In 1 *Pet.* 3. 20. we read, *that the long-ſuffering of God waited in the days of* Noah: And truly, my Beloved, it waits as much in our days, and our provocations be as many, and as high againſt him, as theirs of that Generation were. O Sirs, why are we not in Hell? Why are we not ſealed and ſhut up among the Damned? Why have we one Call more, one Offer more, one ſeaſon of Grace more? Verily 'tis all rich Mercy: O that it might lead us to Repentance.

3. Conſider how ſad it had been with us had the Lord taken that advantage againſt us, which we have over and over given him. Suppoſe (my Beloved) God had not ſpared us; but had cut us off, as he might long ſince, what now had become of us? And where now had we been? had you died of ſuch and ſuch a ſickneſs you have been in, when poſſibly a Sentence of Death was paſſed upon you, both by your ſelves and others, and there was really but a

ſtep

ſtep between Death and you; where and how miſerable had you now been? Had you not been now in the Flames, eternally ſeparated from God and Chriſt? being Godleſs and Chriſtleſs? Have you not now cauſe to fear you had been in as irrecoverable Condition, as the Devils themſelves are in, ſealed up under Wrath and Condemnation, paſt all hopes and poſſibility of Mercy for ever? *Whither had I gone* (ſaith *Auſtin*) *if then* (ſpeaking of the time that he was in his Sins) *I had gone hence? Whither had I gone but into the Flames, and into Eternal Torments, anſwerable to my Sins?* May not we ſay the like? but bleſſed be God, it is yet time and ſeaſon with me and you; we are ſpared to this hour, that we might provide for Death and Eternity. O Sirs, ſuppoſe you or I were now among the Damned; ſuppoſe we were as they are, ſealed up under Wrath, and ſeparated from God, left under an utter impoſſibility of ever ſeeing his Face; how ſad then would our Condition be? Why, thus it might have been with us! Oh what Mercy is it then that God has ſpared us, and does ſpare us as he does? And how ſhould it awaken us to our Work?

4. Con-

4. Consider, how much more sad it may, and will yet be with us, in case we provide not for a dying hour. Truly, the longer God spares us, if we answer not his end in his sparing Mercy, the more miserable shall we be for ever. It will be sad to perish at all; but it will be doubly sad to perish under the long-suffering of God, under the abuse of much goodness, and long patience: O to have many days, and many years patience and goodness come in to witness against a Man at last; how sad will this be! Think of and seriously lay to heart that Scripture, *Rom.* 2. 4, 5. *Despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance, and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? but after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up to thy self wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous Judgment of God.* Every day which God in his Patience affords us, if we be not led to Repentance, is a day of treasuring up Wrath, heaping up to our selves Wrath against the day of Wrath, when Wrath shall come upon us to the utmost. Well, think then what a Mercy it is, that God spares you as he does;

and

and what an Obligation this ſparing Mercy of his is upon you, to ſet all things right in the matters of your Souls againſt a dying hour comes.

4. Are you ſure that thoſe helps and advantages which now you enjoy, to further you in your work, will always laſt and be enjoyed by you. Suppoſe, my Beloved, that God ſhould yet ſpare you, and prolong your days in the Land of the living: Yet, O how ſoon may all your Helps and Advantages, to further you in this great Work, be withdrawn from you! Now, bleſſed be God, you enjoy many bleſſed helps and advantages for your furtherance in this great Work, but how quickly may they all be gone!

1. How ſoon may the Reproofs, the Counſels, the holy Examples of your Godly Friends, Miniſters and Relations, be withdrawn from you? Now you enjoy the loving Reproofs, the wholſome Counſels, the holy Examples of ſuch and ſuch Friends and Relations; one reproves you for Sin, another quickens you to Duty: one dehorts you from the World, and Carnal Pleaſures; another perſwades you to cloſe with Chriſt, and walk with God, to purſue after Hea-

ven

ven and Eternal Life; one wooes and beſeeches you, another charges and commands you to labour and know God, and to live to him, to provide for another Life; and they all ſhew you the path of Life: they tread the way to Heaven in your ſight: All which are great helps and advantages to further you in this great Concern of yours: But how ſoon may all theſe be withdrawn? Thy Friends, thy Miniſters, thy Relations will ſpeedily be lodged in the Duſt, and thou ſhalt never have a word of Reproof, a word of Counſel, a word of Quickning, a word of Encouragement, or a pattern of Faith and Holineſs ſet before thee, by them any more for ever; which would be a dreadful thing. Now the Godly Father, Mother, Yoke-fellow, Maſter, Friend, and Acquaintance, is plying thee with Counſels and Inſtructions, for the good of thy Soul; to morrow it may be, he or ſhe goes down to the Gates of the Grave; and then no more of this for ever.

2. How ſoon may the Word and Ordinances of God, which you now enjoy, be withdrawn from you? Now you enjoy the Word and Ordinances of God; you go from Ordinance to Ordinance;

you

you have *line upon line, precept upon precept*, as it is *Isa.* 28. 10. Yea, let me tell you, *you see and hear these things, which many Prophets and righteous Men have desired to see and hear, but saw and heard them not*, Mat. 13. 16. O how is *Light and Imortality brought to light* to you? How is the way of Salvation made plain and manifest before you? What glorious Discoveries? what blessed Revelations? What sweet and frequent tenders of Christ are made to you? How freely are you *called to the Marriage-Supper of the Lamb?* How lovingly does Christ invite you to himself? How kindly does he stand knocking at the Door of your Souls? Oh (my Beloved) I may now say to you, as *Paul* to the *Corinthians*, 2 Cor. 6. 2. *Behold! now is the accepted time, now is the day of Salvation.* O what helps and advantages are these? But how soon may they all be gone? How soon may the Word of God be withdrawn? How soon may your Light be put out, and your Souls left in Darkness, not knowing whither to goe? Remember that Word of Christ, and lay it to heart, *John* 12. 35. *Yet a little while is the Light with you; walk while ye have*

the

the Light; *leſt Darkneſs come upon you, and he that walketh in Darkneſs, knoweth not whither he goeth. While you have the Light, believe in the Light, that you may be the Children of the Light.* It is a great queſtion, whether we may not loſe Goſpel-Ordinances and all; and where are we then?

3. How ſoon may the motions and ſtrivings of the Spirit of God be withdrawn from you? Now you have the motions and ſtrivings of the Spirit of God in you, and with you; *he moves upon the face of the water* in your Souls; he moves and ſtrives in and by the Word and Ordinances, Mercies and Afflictions; now you have enlightning, and then you have quickning Influences from him; now he ſhews you your work, and then he tenders you his Aſſiſtance; now he diſcovers the odiouſneſs of Sin to you, and then he diſplays the Beauty, Sweetneſs, and Excellency of Chriſt and Holineſs before you: but alas! how ſoon may all this be at an end? Think of that terrible word, *Gen.* 6. 3. *My Spirit ſhall not always ſtrive with Man.* God may poſſibly the next day, yea, the next hour, ſay to his Spirit concerning one or another

us, Let him alone, ſtrive no more with him, move no more in him, convince him no more, perſwade him no more, draw and allure him no more; he is addicted to his Luſts, and to this World, let him alone; he has no mind to Heaven, no deſire to make any proviſion for another World, let him alone; he is unwilling to ſee beyond time to Eternity, he is given to his Carnal Pleaſures, let him alone; he has a reſiſting, gain-ſaying Spirit, let him alone. O how ſoon theſe, and all other helps and advantages you now enjoy, may be withdrawn, who knows? You have all theſe together in one Sctipture, which I deſire you to lay to heart, Luke 19. 41, 42. *When he was come near, he beheld the City* (ſpeaking of *Jeruſalem*) *and wept over it, ſaying, If thou hadſt known, even thou at leaſt in this thy day the things which belong to thy Peace, but now they are hid from thine Eyes.* They had had a day, that did enjoy the things of their Peace, they might and ſhould have improved their Day, and the things of their Peace, by ſecuring their Eternal State: but they neglected it, and now all theſe are withdrawn from them; which cauſed the Lord of Glo-

ry

ry, the Joy of the whole Earth, to weep over them; ſo woful, miſerable, and deplorable he ſaw their condition to be? and how ſad will it be with you, if once Chriſt ſhould come to ſay over you that diſmal word, *Now they are hid from your Eyes.*

5. Is it an eaſy matter (think you) to ſet things right in your Souls, and to make all things ready for a dying hour? Suppoſe (my Beloved) that you ſhould live yet many days, and withal, your helps and advantages for the good of your Souls ſhall be continued to you: yet, is it an eaſie work which you have to do; and ſhall you have time and days to ſpare? Believe it Sirs, all will be little enough to ſet things right, to make things ready for a dying hour. Pray conſider with me theſe few things as to this.

1. Conſider in what a woful diſorder all things are at preſent with you, and how utterly unready for a dying hour: I will give you the Scripture-ſtate of your caſe; You are *dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins*, under whole Loads and Mountains of Scarlet, Crimſon Guilt; *without Chriſt, without Hope, without God in the World, alienated, and Enemies in your minds*

minds, by wicked works; yea, Enmity it ſelf againſt God and Chriſt; full of Sin both within and without, and nothing but Sin, having no good dwelling in you; void of all Grace, all true ſpiritual Life; under the power and predominancy of Luſt; *ſerving divers Luſts and Pleaſures, and carried captive by the Devil at his Will*: Cloſely glued to, and deeply in love with this World: ignorant of God, and of the great Myſtery of the Father and of Chriſt; at leaſt having no ſaving knowledg of them: no ſavour of Heaven, no reliſh of ſpiritual things in your Souls: wallowing in your Blood and Gore, being *filthy and abominable, to every good work reprobate*: the Heart ſtrongly averſe from God, and all Good, and vigorouſly bent to Sin and Vanity: Nothing of Heaven within; but full of Hell, full of the Spirit and Image of the Devil; under the Law of Sin; ſtrangers to the Law of Grace: no Union with Chriſt; no Oil in the Veſſel; *poor, miſerable, blind, and naked*; at moſt, *having but the Form, and denying the Power of Godlineſs*. This is your Condition: O what diſorders are theſe! And

what an unready posture are you in for Death and Eternity?

2. Consider how great a thing it is to be ready for Death, ready indeed, and to have all things set right, and in order, against a dying hour comes: and how much is requisite in order thereunto. 'Tis a great saying of an Holy Man; *No one* (saith he) *can joyfully welcome Death, but he that has been long composing his Spirit, and making ready for it.* O my Beloved, to be indeed ready to quit the World, to go into the Divine Presence, the Great, the Holy, the Glorious Presence of God, to be ready to enter upon the Beatifical Vision, to possess a Mansion in the Father's House, to joyn with an Heavenly Host of Angels, and Spirits of just Men made perfect, in eternal Praising, Admiring, and Adoring of Father, Son, and Holy-Ghost, Believe it, this is a great thing, and great things are requisite thereunto. This calls for a near Union with Christ, a firm Peace with God, clear Evidences for Heaven; for much Grace and Holiness, much Heavenliness and Spirituality of Mind, much weanedness from this World, much holy deadness

to

to Sin, Self, and the Creature; much Victory over Corruption; much Soul-cleansing; much purity of Heart and Affections; much Diligence and Faithfulness in Duties: And (my Beloved) are these little things, or things easily to be accomplished and attained unto? O Sirs! The Scripture, speaking of these things, calls upon us to *strive*, Luke 13. 24. *to give all diligence* in the pursuit of them, 2 *Pet.* 1. 5, 10. To manage and dispatch them *with fear and trembling*, Phil. 2. 12. All which tells us, that they are great things, and not easily to be accomplished and attained unto: Therefore we had need look after this, and neglect no longer.

3. Consider, what lets and hindrances, difficulties and oppositions you must expect to meet withal in your minding and managing this Work; not only is the Work it self great, but you must also expect many lets and hindrances, much difficulty and opposition in the managing of it: You must expect lets and oppositions from the Devil, he is the Enemy of Souls: and you must expect that he will make use of all his Wiles, Methods, and Devices,

all his Craft and Cunning, all his Artifices; and that he will ſtir up all his Wrath and Malice againſt you: he is your Enemy, and he is a ſubtil Enemy, a potent Enemy, an indefatigable Enemy, an Enemy *that always goes about ſeeking whom he may devour*, 1 Pet. 5. 8. You muſt expect Lets and Oppoſitions from the World too, from the Men of the World, from the things of the World, from the ſmiles of the World, from the frowns of the World. The World is yonr Enemy as well as the Devil: So much is intimated, 1 *John* 5. 4. And you muſt expect oppoſition from it: The Men of the World will diſcourage you; the things of the World will divert you; the troubles of the World will mightily depreſs you; the enjoyments of the World will miſerably enſnare and entangle you: The World is of a marvellous bewitching, enſnaring and entangling Nature: It is indeed oppoſite to God, and all Goodneſs; and ſo to the whole intereſt of our Souls. *The Friendſhip of the World is Enmity to God*, James 1. 4. The World will plead for, and take up your time, your ſtrength, your thoughts. O the

hindrance

hindrance that the World is to thousands, and ten thousands, in the work of their Souls; truly this ruines Multitudes for ever: This ruin'd him we reade of, *Matth.* 19. 32. And, saith *Paul*, *Demas hath forsaken us, having imbraced this present World*, 2 Tim. 4. 10.

You must expect Lets and Hindrances also from your own Hearts: yea, from them above all others: *The Heart* (the Holy Ghost tells us) *is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, &c.* Jer. 17. 9. And who of us does at all observe it, and the workings of it, does not find it to be so? Now it will openly oppose you, then it will secretly seduce and ensnare you: Now it will carry you off, and draw you back from God and Duty, *Heb.* 3. 12. Then it will turn you aside to Sin and Vanity, *Isa.* 44. 20. Now it will divert you from Duty; then it will make you dead and slothful in Duty: 'Tis indeed wholly set against all that is good; and it hath a thousand ways to hinder you in your great Work; and you must expect that it will do its utmost to hinder you. This is a close Enemy, it is always at hand; there is no end of

its oppoſition, till Life it ſelf ends. One of the Ancients (I remember) breaks out into a ſad exclamation againſt his own Heart, thus: *My Heart* (ſaith he) *is a wicked Heart, a vain Heart, a roving, a wandring Heart: My mind is exceeding light, wonderful inconſtant, a Vagabond, and a Fugitive, it changes it ſelf into all ſhapes, it will, and it will not; 'tis like a Leaf moved and carried about with the Wind. My vain and importunate Heart hales me now to the Market, and then to Strifes and Brawlings; now to Feaſting, and then to impure Luſts; now the Fleſh is inflamed with ſordid Titillations, then the Mind is defiled with filthy Cogitations.* And who of us may not make the ſame complaint? Yea, ſuch is the Enmity and Oppoſition of our own Hearts againſt Heaven, and the things of Heaven, that many times when we moſt reſolve, and ſet our ſelves to follow God, and to purſue the Work of our Souls, then they ſet us moſt back. It was a great ſpeech of that ſame Father, *This* (ſays he) *is my daily exerciſe, with my whole ſtrength I bend to thee, and would mount up to God and Heaven, but by how much the more ſtrongly I endeavour to come up*

to

to thee by ſo much the more powerful I am caſt into the Earth, into my ſelf, and even under my ſelf, captivated to my Luſts.

And ſo 'tis often with us: Lets then, and Oppoſitions muſt be expected by us on all hands; and we had need therefore the more to awaken to our Work. 'Tis true, if you will engage in good earneſt in the work of your Souls, your Helps and Encouragements will be greater than your Lets and Diſcouragements; You will have more with you than againſt you: you will have God with you, and Chriſt with you, and the Comforter with you, and all the Graces of the Covenant with you; be encouraged therefore to ſet upon Soul-work. Now lay all theſe things together, and ſee if it be an eaſie matter to make ready for a dying hour; and if it be not, why ſhould we neglect? why ſhould we delay any longer?

6. How terrible will Death be to you! and what a dreadful change will it make with you, in caſe you ſtill neglect to make ready for it! Suppoſe (my Beloved) you go on in the neglect of this Great Concern, *putting far from*

you the evil day; What (think you) will the iſſue of it be? Will not Death be moſt terrible to you, when you ſhall be called to conflict with it? Will it not make a dreadful change with you? Surely it will. Death to an unready Soul, what will it be? It will be the period of all his Mercies, of all his Comforts, of all his Hopes: For ſuch an one receives all his Good Things in this Life, before Death comes, *Luke* 16. 25. It will be the ſending of him to his own place, the cutting him down as Fewel for everlaſting Burnings: It will be (as a Worthy Divine ſpeaks) *As the taking up of a Draw-bridg, and the pulling up of the Flood-gates of God's Eternal Wrath, to let in the Deluge of it upon his Soul for ever*: It will be a change to him: but what change will it be? ſurely a very ſad one.

1. A Change from Earth to Hell: and is not this a ſad Change? *The Wicked ſhall be turned into Hell, and all that forget God*, Pſal. 19. 17. And we read of the *Rich Man* (who was unready for Death) *that being dead, he was in Hell*, Luke 22. 23.

2. A Change from Light to Darkneſs:

neſs: and is not that a ſad Change? The Holy Ghoſt ſpeaking of ſuch an one, tells us, *God ſhall drive him out of Light into Darkneſs, and chaſe him out of the World, John* 18. 18. Here wicked Men enjoy the light of Creature-comforts, but God will drive them out of theſe, into the Darkneſs of Eternal Miſery, into *utter Darkneſs*, Mat. 25. 30. into *blackneſs of Darkneſs*, Jude 13.

3. A change from Pleaſure to Pain, from Delight to Torment: a ſad change it is, from Pleaſure and Delight in Sin, to Pain and Torment for Sin, *Luke* 16. 23. Here the Soul ſports himſelf in the Pleaſures and Delights of Sin, and he thinks he can never have enough; but then there will be an end of all thoſe Pleaſures and Delights, and nothing but Pain, Torment, and Vexation will ſucceed them.

4. A Change from the offers of Grace, to the Revelation of Wrath: *Shall thy loving-kindneſs be declared in the Grave, or thy faithfulneſs in Deſtruction?* (ſaith the *Pſalmiſt*) in that 88 *Pſal.* 11. True, in 1 *Pet.* 3. 19, 20. we read of *Chriſt's preaching by the Spirit to the Spirits in Priſon*, that is, to Souls in

Hell: but mark, when was it that he preach'd to them? Not when in Prison, but in the days of *Noah*, when they lived in the World. There is never an offer of Grace and Love made to Souls in the Grave; while Life lasts, the Soul hears the joyful sound; And O the sweet Offers, the gracious Tenders, the loving Invitations, that are made to him in Christ, of Grace, of Eternal Life and Love! O the wooings, the meltings, the intreatings, the alluring of Divine Love to and over the Soul! But when Death comes, farewel all these, farewel all the sweet Offers of Christ, and all the blessed motions of the Spirit; then there's nothing but Wrath revealed, and Wrath shall come on the neglected Soul to the uttermost.

5. A change from fair probabilities to utter impossibilities of Life and Salvation; a sad change still: *Now is the accepted time, now is the day of Salvation*; now, and not hereafter, 2 *Cor.* 6. 2. Now there is a fair probability for the worst of Sinners to be saved, if they will look after Salvation, and mind their Eternal Concerns; Christ is both able and willing to save: To save was

the

the end of his coming into the World, and of all he did and ſuffered here, 1 *Tim.* 1. 15. Now they are beſought and entreated to be reconciled to God, 2 *Cor.* 5. 19, 20. but when Death comes, that changes theſe fair Probabilities into utter Impoſſibilities of Life and Salvation. Therefore mark. *Now* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *is the day of Salvation*; that is, now whilſt Life laſts, and while the Goſpel is preached.

6. A change from Hope to Deſpair: a ſad change indeed. We read, that *the hope of the Hypocrite ſhall periſh*, Job 8. 13. and that *the expectation of the wicked ſhall periſh*, Prov. 10. 28. Whether Men be open Sinners, or cloſe Hypocrites, their hopes at laſt ſhall all fail, and turn into Deſpair, deſpair of ever ſeeing God, or enjoying the leaſt Tittle or *Ioto* of Good for ever.

Thus Death will be terrible to you, and make a dreadful change with you, in caſe you neglect to make ready for its coming: 'twill affright you, as bad as the Hand-writing upon the Wall did that proud King, *Dan.* 5. 5, 6. *Which made his Countenance change, his Thoughts to trouble him, and the Joynts of his Loins*

to

to be looſed, and his Knees to ſmite one againſt another. O when Death comes, and thou ſhalt be found unready, how will thy Countenance change, thy Joints be looſed, thy Thoughts troubled, and thy Heart tremble within thee? In a word, I will ſay to you, as the Prophet ſpake of old, *Iſa.* 10. 3. *What will you do in the day of Viſitation, and whither will you flee for help?* When Death comes, what will you do? Which way will you look? Will there be any hope, any help, any refuge for your Souls to flee unto? Alas! There will be none. Wilt thou then run to the Mercies of God, and cry, Lord, Lord? Alas! it will be in vain; he will then ſay unto you, *Depart from me, I know you not*, *Matth.* 25. 11, 12. Wilt thou then labour to get Grace and Pardon? Alas! it will be too late; then the *Door will be ſhut* againſt thee, *Matth.* 25. 10. Wilt thou then deſire others to ſpare thee ſome of their Oil? Alas! that will be a vain thing; they will tell thee, they have but enough for themſelves, *Matth.* 25. 9. Wilt thou then plead thy Gifts, Parts, and Services for Chriſt? Alas! it will be to no purpoſe, unleſs thou haſt done

done the main Work; notwithstanding all thy Gifts and Services, he will send thee away with the Workers of Iniquity, *Matth.* 7. 22, 23. Wilt thou call upon the Rocks and Mountains to cover thee, and hide thee from the Wrath of Him that sits upon the Throne? Alas! it will be in vain, *Rev.* 6. *latter end.* Oh Sinner! when thou shalt see thy self launching out into the Great Ocean of Eternity; and God shall, as it were, say to thee by the Mouth of thy own Conscience; Well now, Time and Days are at an end with you, and will never dawn more; what hast thou done for thy Soul? What provision hast thou made for another World? Is Christ thine? Hast thou gotten thy Sins pardoned, and the like? When it shall be thus (I say) what wilt thou then do, and whither wilt thou then look? How wilt thou then cry out, Undone, undone, I am lost for ever; my Day is ended, and my Work is still to do! Wo is me! what a God, a Christ, a Heaven, a Blessedness, a Glory, have I wilfully and foolishly lost? Truly thou, and such as thou, are the only Persons whose Death will be truly lamentable. I remember

member a saying I have read in one of the Ancients: *They* (saith he) *are to be bewailed in their Death, whom the Devils drag away to the Torments of the Infernal Pit: not they whom the Holy Angels do conduct to the joys of Paradise. They are to be bewailed, who after Death are by the Devils turned into Hell; and not they, who by the Angels are placed or set down in Heaven.* O that these things might convince you of your Folly, and awaken your Souls; and that so, as yet to know the things of your Peace in your Day, and the time of your Visitation.

CHAP. VI.

Being a call to all, Good and Bad, Saints and Sinners, to address themselves to the Great Work of making all ready for a dying hour.

WHat is the Language of all this? Verily it calls aloud upon us all, Good and Bad, Saints and Sinners, to make it our great Business to set all things right in the matters of our Souls, and

and make all ready for a dying hour: And O that we would make this improvement of this great Truth, and of God's ſparing Goodneſs to us! He ſpares us, and why does he ſpare us, but that we ſhould ſet all things right, and make all things ready? O that we would now fall in with the end and deſign of God herein, making it our great Care and Buſineſs in time to provide for Eternity, in Life to make ready for Death. Some of you, I verily believe, are about this Work, and the Lord proſper you in it: You know you were born for Eternity, and you do endeavour to live for Eternity; Your great Work in time is to make proviſion for a bleſſed Eternity, Oh happy Souls that you are! Others of us, and thoſe, by far, the moſt (I fear) are utterly negligent in this Buſineſs; Death and Eternity are little minded by us; but we are in a ſleepy, drowſie, ſecure Spirit, and to ſuch (me-thinks) this Truth ſpeaks in a Language much like to that of the Ship-Maſter to *Jonah*, Jonah 1. 6. *What meaneſt thou, O Sleeper? Ariſe, and call upon thy God, if ſo be he will think on us, that we periſh not.* So, what mean you,

you; O you ſleepy, drowſie, ſecure Souls! ariſe, make ready for a dying hour; ſet all things right, all things in order in your Spiritual Concernments, leſt Death come upon you at unawares, and you be loſt for ever: and to ſuch of us I would ſay, as ſometimes God did by the Prophet to *Hezekiah*, Iſa. 38. 1. *Set thine Houſe in order, for thou ſhalt die, and not live.* So ſay I to you, Set your Hearts in order, your Spiritual Concerns in order; make all even between God and you, for you ſhall ſhortly die, and not live; you ſhall ſhortly go hence and be no more, and why ſhould we not all do ſo? If you be to change your Condition in the World, how careful and ſolicitous are you to have all things ready, and in order for that change? Why (my Beloved) you are ſhortly to paſs under that great and laſt Change? a Change from Time to Eternity; and will you have no care, no ſolicitude to make ready for that Change? If you are to take a Journey, though but a few Miles, or to make a Voyage into a ſtrange Land; Oh how are you concerned to have all things ready, all things in a prepared poſture, in order there-

thereunto? And (my Beloved) ſhould not you be more concerned to make ready for your great Journey, your laſt and great Voyage? You are making a Journey, a Voyage out of Time into Eternity; You are juſt launching forth into the great Ocean: And what, nothing in order, nothing ready, nothing ſet right in order thereunto? That is ſtrange! If you have ſome great Buſineſs, a Buſineſs of more than ordinary importance to be done; or a Suit at Law to be tryed and determined, O how cloſe do you follow it? And how careful are you to have all things ready in order thereunto? And (my Beloved) ſhould you not be as careful and diligent to prepare, and ſet all things right for the great Buſineſs of your Souls in another World? Have you any Buſineſs, any Concern of greater importance to you, than the Concern of your Souls, and Eternity? If you are to appear before ſome Earthly Judg, eſpecially if it be about a matter that concerns your Life, Oh how thoughtful are you to have all things ready, and in order, in reference thereunto? And (my Beloved) ſhould not you be as thoughtful

and

and ſollicitous to make all ready, and to ſet all right, in order to your appearing before the Judg of all the Earth; and that about a matter which concerns the Life of your Souls, about a matter of Eternal Life or Death. Well, what ſhall I ſay? Will you ſet about this great Buſineſs, this great Concern? Or, is it all one with you, whether you live or die; are ſaved, or damned to Eternity? God yet ſpares you, bleſſed be his Name; Will you not ſet all right, before ye go hence and be no more? Sinners, will you ſet about this great Buſineſs? Your Work is wholly yet to do; though, it may be, your Day is far ſpent, your Glaſs is almoſt run, your Sun near ſetting, and all your Work to do. Oh *'tis high time for you to awake out of ſleep*; unleſs you mean to ſleep the ſleep of Eternal Death. Saints, will you ſet about this great Buſineſs, while God ſpares you? You have done ſomewhat, but there is much more yet to be done; there is much out of order yet in your Souls: Grace weak, (it may be) Corruption ſtrong, Peace broken, Evidences blurr'd and blotted: Unbelief powerful within you, the Heart much eſtranged from God; little ſuitableneſs

bleneſs to Heaven in your Spirits, and the like; Will you now labour to *recover ſtrength?* How many of us may complain, as that holy Man (St. *Bernard*) once did? *I am aſhamed to live, becauſe I am ſo unprofitable; and I am afraid to die, becauſe I am ſo unprepared.* Surely, this Truth concerns the beſt of us all: and if we underſtand ourſelves, we cannot but know it; the Lord help us to know it effectually. And if after all, you would indeed addreſs to this great Work and Buſineſs, then I have ſeveral great and weighty Directions to propound to you for your help therein, of which ſome more general, ſome more particular, and I would ſpeak of each diſtinctly.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Wherein are propounded several General Directions, in order to a thorough preparation of Soul for a dying hour.

1. WOuld you indeed set all things right in your Souls, make all ready for a dying hour? Then in your most prosperous and flourishing State here, maintain a frequent and serious Remembrance of Death and the Grave upon your Spirits. *If a Man live many Years* (saith *Solomon*) *and rejoyce in them all; yet let him remember the days of Darkness, for they are many*, Eccles. 11. 8. By the days of Darkness here, we are to understand Death, and the state of Death; the abode of our Bodies in the Grave, which is *a Land of Darkness, and where the Light is as Darkness*, *Job* 10. 20. Now, saith he, though a Man live many Years, and rejoyce in them all; that is, *Though a Man live long and prosperously, long and joyfully*: yet let him remember Death, and the Grave, the future state. 'Tis true, there are other days of Darkness, which we are

are ſubject to in this World, and ſhould be remembred by us: Days of outward Darkneſs, the Darkneſs of outward Trouble and Affliction; and Days of inward Darkneſs, the Darkneſs of Spiritual Diſtreſs and Dereliction: and indeed 'tis of marvellous uſe to us in our Proſperity to remember theſe Days of Darkneſs; but eſpecially we ſhould remember Death and the Grave; We ſhould carry a lively Remembrance of theſe days of Darkneſs daily upon us; and indeed our not remembring theſe days of Darkneſs, is one great cauſe why we are ſo unready for Death, and the Grave, as we are. When we are in the midſt of our Enjoyments, and the ſtreams run pleaſantly about us, we are too apt to forget theſe days of Darkneſs; we are ſo taken with our Earthly Comforts, that we are loth to think of Death and Eternity, *putting far from us the evil Day*; as thoſe in their Enjoyments did, *Amos* 6. 3. And therefore, when theſe days come they find us ſo unready, and our Spiritual Concernments ſo diſcompoſed, as uſually they do. But (my Beloved) as ever you would have all right, and in order in your

poor

poor Souls againſt a dying hour comes: let me recommend this to you, as one ſpecial Help; Maintain a deep and frequent remembrance of Death and the Grave upon your Spirits; remember the days of darkneſs, and that eſpecially theſe two ways:

1. Remember them ſo, as to have them much in your Meditation: be much and frequent in the Contemplation of Death and the Grave: This the Holy Ghoſt calls a *Conſidering our latter End*, and withal, mentions it as a Buſineſs of great importance to us, *Deut.* 32. 29. To conſider, is to revolve a thing in our Minds, and to keep it much in our Thoughts and Meditations. And thus we ſhould conſider our latter End, and remember the days of Darkneſs: This is that the Saints of old have been much converſant in; they were much and frequent in the Thoughts and Meditations of Death: as I might inſtance in the good old Patriarchs, *Job*, *David*, and others: And 'tis what does marvellouſly conduce to our preparation for it. *The Meditation of Death* (ſaith one) *is Life*: It is that which greatly promotes our Spiritual Life; therefore

walk

walk much among the Tombs, and converſe much and frequently with the thoughts of a dying hour.

2. Remember them ſo, as to have them daily in your expectation. In the midſt of all your Enjoyments, expect Death's approach daily: this is called *a waiting for our Change. All the days of my appointed Time, will I wait till my Change comes*, Job 14. 14. And we are commanded *to wait for the coming of our Lord*; as that which lies in the directeſt tendency to the exacteſt readineſs and preparation for his Coming, *Luke* 12. 36. *Expect Death every hour*, (ſaith one) *for 'tis every hour approaching thee: In the Morning, when thou riſeſt, think with thy ſelf, this may be the laſt Day: In the Evening, when thou lieſt down, think with thy ſelf, this may be the laſt Night I may ever have in this World. I know not when my Lord will come, whether in the Morning, or in the Evening, at Midnight, or at the Cock-crowing: therefore I will be always expecting his Coming.* Woe, and alas for us! We are apt to talk of many Years yet to come, as he did, *Luke* 12. 9. whereas we ſhould live in the expecta-

tion

tion of Death every moment. Thus let us conſider the days of Darkneſs, it will marvellouſly conduce to the preparation of the Soul for them: the Meditation and Expectation of Death will conduce much (among others) to theſe four things:

1. It will conduce much to our humbling and ſelf-abaſing; *Let a Man own himſelf to be a Mortal* (ſaith *Auſtin*) *and Pride will, it muſt down.* And *think frequently of Death* (ſaith another) *and thou wilt eaſily bring down thy proud Heart.* Hence alſo the conſideration of Death is often in Scripture mentioned by the Holy Ghoſt, as an argument to make us humble; *Duſt thou art, and unto Duſt thou ſhalt return,* Gen. 3. 19. as elſewhere.

2. It will conduce much to the weaning of our Hearts from this World, and the looſening of them from the things here below; *The time is ſhort,* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *What then? Why it remaineth, that they that have Wives, be as though they had none; and thoſe that weep, as thoſe that wept not; and thoſe that rejoyce, as though they rejoyced not; thoſe that buy, as though they poſſeſſed not;*

not; and they that use this World, as not abusing it; for the fashion of this World passeth away, 1 Cor. 7. 29, 30, 31. He mentions the shortness of Time, as that the Meditation and Expectation whereof, has the directest tendency in it, to wean and loosen the Heart from all things here below. And indeed, (as St. *Bernard* hath it) *he easily contemns all things here, who looks upon himself as dying daily.*

3. It will conduce much to the engaging the Heart to Heaven, and the things of Heaven, to a serious pursuit of a blessed Eternity. So we find, *Heb.* 11. 13, &c. *These all died in the Faith* (saith the Apostle) *not having received the Promises; but having seen them afar off, and were perswaded of them, and embraced them: and confessed, that they were Strangers and Pilgrims on the Earth:* that is, they were apprehensive they had but a little time to stay here: And what then? *They desire a better Countrey*; that is, *an Heavenly:* the apprehension they had of their departure hence quickned them unto earnest desires and pursuits after the better Country, the Heavenly Land: and in-

deed one great reaſon why we breath no more, and preſs no more after Heaven, and a bleſſed Eternity, is, becauſe we ſo ſeldom remember theſe days of Darkneſs.

4. It will conduce much to the quickning of the Heart to Duty, and to Diligence and Faithfulneſs therein. Chriſt himſelf made uſe of it for this End: *I muſt work the Works of him that ſent me, while it is day; the night cometh when no Man can work*, John 9. 4. *Peter* alſo that holy Apoſtle made uſe of it to that end: *I will not be negligent* (ſaith he) to do ſo and ſo in the way of my Duty; *as knowing that ſhortly I ſhall put off this Tabernacle*, 2 Pet. 1. 12, 13, 14. The conſideration of the near approach of his Death, quickened him to his Work and Duty. And the Scripture propounds it, as that which has a tendency to this thing: *Whatſoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy Might*, (ſaith *Solomon*) *for there is no Work nor Counſel in the Grave, whither thou art going*, Eccleſ. 9. 10. He propounds the Conſideration of our going to the Grave, as a means to quicken us to our preſent Work. By all which we

ſee,

ſee, how much the ſerious remembrance of the Days of Darkneſs muſt needs contribute to our readineſs and preparedneſs for theſe Days: Therefore be much in this Work. For my own part, I have hardly found any one thing more quickning and ingaging upon my Spirit, than this: And Souls, I would beg you, as you would live for ever, think often of Death.

2. Would you indeed ſet all things right in your Souls, and make all ready for a dying hour? Then be not fond of long Life here in this World; but rather covet to live as much as poſſible in a little time: I would ſpeak of each diſtinctly.

1. Be not fond of long Life here in this World. A fond hope and deſire of long Life here, is one of the greateſt Enemies to a true preparation of Soul for our departure hence. For pray obſerve, take a Man that is fond of long Life here, and all his Thoughts and Projects are for this World: He is wholly taken up about, and carried out after the concerns of Time, ſcarce allowing himſelf one ſerious Thought for Death and Eternity: A ſad inſtance you have

hereof in this Rich Man, *Luke* 12. 19. he reckoned upon many Years, upon a long Life here; and what are the things he is taken up about? Verily the things of this World only, the encreaſe of his Goods, and where to ſtore his Treaſures. Fond hopes and deſires of long Life here, will certainly produce great Delays, if not utter Neglects, in the great Work and Concern of our Souls and Eternity. As ever therefore you would have all right and well in the Concerns of your Souls when you come to die, be not fond of long Life here; but ſit as looſe in your thoughts, hopes, and deſires, both of this Life, and all the enjoyments of it, as poſſibly you can. And indeed (my Beloved) to reaſon it a little with you, why ſhould you be fond of long Life here? Why ſhould you covet a long ſtay in this World? I would only plead with you in two things as to this:

1. What is this World, and what have we here, that we ſhould here covet a long ſtay? Is this World ſuch a ſweet, ſuch an amiable, ſuch a deſirerable thing? It is an angry World, a frowning World, a dirty World, a bewitching

witching, enſnaring World: 'Tis a waſte, howling Wilderneſs, a ſtrange Land, an Houſe of Bondage, a troubleſom, tempeſtuous Sea, an *Aceldama*, a Field of Blood: ſuch I am ſure 'tis oftentimes to the poor Saints and People of God: and what have we here? Why, here we have *Fears within, and Fightings without, Troubles on every ſide*, and from all hands; from Friends, from Enemies, from Men, from Devils: here we have Sorrows, Snares, Loſſes, Wounds, Deaths, Dangers, Temptations, Seductions, Diſappointments, *vexation of Spirit*: and truly little elſe is to be expected by us here, except that which is worſe than all this, (*viz.*) daily raiſings and ebullitions of Luſt, violent eruptions of Corruption, great aboundings of Sin and Iniquity, both in our ſelves, and others; continual breakings with God, and departings from him, renewing and increaſing Sin and Guilt daily. Indeed this World is full of Sin, and Temptation to Sin: 'Tis (as *Auguſtine* ſpeaks of it) *tota Tentatio*, all Temptation: and as it is all Temptation, ſo 'tis little elſe but Sin: and why ſhould we covet a long ſtay here?

Why (saith one of the Ancients) *should we so much desire that Life, in which, by how much the longer we live, by so much the more we sin; and the more numerous our Days are, the more numerous will our Sins be?* Who would desire to stay long in a Prison, or a Dungeon, in a state and place of Sin and Sorrow? and such is this World.

2. Is there not a better Life, a better Place, a better State for our Souls to long and aspire after? what do you think of the Life above, a whole Eternity spent in the Divine Presence, in the bosom of Divine Love, a Life of Love, a Life of Pleasure, a Life of Joy, a Life of Admiration, a Life of Holiness, perfect and unspotted Holiness, a Life every way correspondent to the Divine Life, and the Divine Will? is not this a better Life? *To be with Christ, is best of all*, Phil. 1. 23. To possess a Mansion in our Father's House, prepared by our Lord and Head, Jesus Christ, for us: to live for ever in the vision and fruition of Father, Son, and Spirit: to dwell in the Heavenly City, where no unclean thing can enter: to joyn in with the glorious Host of Saints and Angels above, and with them to spend a whole Eternity in

Songs

Songs of Praiſe and Hallelujahs to God, and the Lamb: to take up all our Waters at the Fountain-head; and indeed to dive and bathe unchangeably in the Fountain of all Delights at the Father's Right hand: O how ſweet is this Life! and now much to be deſired by us! In a word (my Beloved) the Sains, when in the beſt frame, have many of them been ſo far from being fond of long Life here, that indeed they have thought it long till the time came, when they ſhould go hence and be no more, crying out with an holy Impatiency; *Why is his Chariot ſo long a coming? Why tarry the Wheels of his Chariot?*

2. Covet to live much in a little time. 'Tis ſaid of the Reverend and Worthy Divine, Dr. *Preſton*, that he deſired to, and accordingly did, live much in a little time. And our Lord himſelf (you know) did not live long in this World; but he lived much in a little time: he did much Work in a few days for God and Souls. And indeed (my Beloved), 'tis not a long Life, but a fruitful Life, that is moſt amiable, moſt deſirable, and moſt like his Life, who is Life it ſelf. 'Tis not he that lives many Years, but he that lives

much in a few Years, that is the moſt happy Soul. I know thoſe, whoſe Ambition it is not to live long, but to live fruitfully, and to do as much as poſſibly they can in a little time: and might they have their Option or Choice, it would be this, to live much in a little time: and then have their diſmiſſion to Reſt. And (my Beloved) let this be your Choice, and your Ambition; be caſting about in your ſelves, how you may live much in a little time; how you may compaſs much Spiritual Work and Buſineſs in a few days: Labour to treaſure up much Grace, much Experience of God and his Love; to bring a large Revenue of Glory to him, and the like. And for this end, poſſeſs your Souls with a deep ſenſe of the exceeding worth and precioufneſs of Time; and accordingly ſet your ſelves to redeem it, looking upon the loſs thereof to be the greateſt loſs in the World, *Epheſ.* 5. 16. we are commanded to *redeem the Time*; And what is it to redeem the Time, but to eſteem Time as precious, as a thing of incomparable Worth and Value; and accordingly to make the beſt and higheſt improvement

of

of it for the Honour of God, and good of our Souls, that poſſibly we can? It is to fill up our Time with Duty, and our Duties with Grace: to make uſe of Time for thoſe ends, for which Time is given us; not to eat, and drink, and ſolace our ſelves in the Creature, but to ſerve and honour the Creator; to *work out our Salvation*; to get acquaintance with God and Chriſt; to make ſure of Heaven and a bleſſed Eternity. O Sirs, look upon Time as precious; ſo indeed it is: Time is the moſt weighty and momentous thing in the World: 'Tis that which our Eternal All depends upon: According as we do, or do not manage or improve our time well, ſo will it go with us for ever. 'Tis a ſweet Meditation which I have read in a Diſcourſe of an holy Man; *This Life* (ſaith he) *of ours is moſt ſwift; and yet in it Eternal Life is either gotten, or loſt for ever. This Life of ours is moſt miſerable; and yet in it Eternal Happineſs is either gotten, or loſt for ever.* No leſs than a whole Eternity of Happineſs, or Miſery, Salvation, or Damnation, depends upon our uſe and management of our little time here in this World.

As the Tree falls, ſo it lies, Eccleſ. 11. 3. As it is with us when we go out of Time, ſo it will be with us to all Eternity: and this we ſhould be much in the thoughts of, accounting therefore the loſs of time to be the greateſt loſt. 'Tis a weighty ſaying, which I have read in one of the Ancients: *It is a great and heavy loſs indeed* (ſaith he) *when we neither do good, nor think good* (and let me add, nor get good) *but we ſuffer our Hearts to wander abroad, about vain and unprofitable things: and yet it is too difficult to reſtrain or keep them back from theſe things.* Truly, no loſs like the loſs of Time: the loſs of Eſtate, the loſs of Trade, the loſs of this or the other outward Comfort, is nothing to the loſs of Time. Theſe being loſt, may be recovered again: but Time being loſt, can never be recovered more. Accordingly ſet your ſelves to redeem it, and do it as much as poſſibly you can, accounting that day loſt, wherein you have not done ſomething for God, and your Souls. The truth is, we live no more than we are converſant in the work of God, and our Souls: For, as for that which we call Life, that is not ſpent in this Work, it is not indeed to be accounted Life.

Thirdly,

Thirdly; Would you indeed ſet all things right in your Souls, make all ready for a dying hour? Then think much and often with your ſelves, how great a Change Death will make with you whenever it comes. Death is a Change, and in many reſpects the greateſt Change which the Sons of Men are to paſs through: *All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my Change come,* Job 14. 14. *Job* had many Changes, and great Changes: *Changes and War were upon him,* as he complained, *Job* 10. 16. But no Change like this of Death, this was the great Change, and this he waited for all his days. Indeed Death is a great Change to every Man and Woman, come when, or how it will: 'tis that (as you have heard) that deprives Men of all their Enjoyments here; which diſſolves the Union betwixt Soul and Body; which turns the Body to Duſt and Putrefaction; and (which is unſpeakably more than this) it is that through which the Soul enters into the immediate Preſence of God, and ſtates it in Eternity; it is a Change from Time to Eternity, from Works to Rewards, a Reward ſuitable to the Work we have here

been doing, whether it be good or evil; and is not this a great Change? Take a few hints in particular about it, to shew the greatness of it.

First; It is such a Change, as all other Changes upon the outward Man are but leading and introductory unto, and into which at last they all issue, and resolve themselves. We pass through many Changes here in this World; we may say as *Job*, *Changes and War are upon us.* But these are but leading and preliminary, as it were, to this last and great Change: these all are, or should be to us Monitors of this last Change, and do but a little darkly shadow it out unto us.

Secondly; It is such a Change as calls for great Spiritual Changes to pass upon us here, to fit and prepare us for it; a Change in our Minds, a Change in our Wills, a Change in our Affections, a Change in our Conversations, a Change in our whole Man; a real Change, a through Change, an universal Change; *Old things must be done away, and all things must become new,* 2 Cor. 5. 17. The Mind must be changed from Darkness to Light, from Ignorance to Knowledg

ledg in Spiritual Things: The Will must be changed from Enmity to Subjection, from Rebellion to Obedience to God and his Laws; the Affections must be changed from Earthlineſs to Heavenlineſs, from Carnality to Spirituality: the Converſation muſt be changed from Sin to Holineſs; from Vanity and Looſneſs, to ſtrictneſs and ſerioufneſs in walking with God. Oh how great muſt that Change be, that calls for ſo many, and ſo great Changes, to fit and prepare us for it?

Thirdly; It is ſuch a Change, as tho it do not put us out of being, yet it puts us into a quite other manner of being than ever we yet had; a Change which ſets us naked before the Tribunal of God, to receive a difinitive Sentence of Life or Death from him; a Chauge which brings us into the immediate ſight of God, either as a gracious Father, or as a revenging Judg? A Change which fully opens the Eyes of the Soul, and makes him to ſee both Grace and Sin, Heaven and Hell; Grace in its Amiableneſs, Sin in its Odioufneſs, Heaven in its Glorry, and Hell in its Horrour: for (my Beloved) whatever we are, whether

good

good and bad, Saints or Sinners; yet when we die, our Eyes will be fully opened, to see these things; we shall see unutterable things; if we be good, we shall see them with Joy and Exultation; if we be bad, we shall see them with Anguish and Confusion of Soul.

Fourthly; It is such a Change, as makes us capable of, and actually puts us into unspeakably greater things, either of Happiness or Misery, Comfort or Confusion, than ever here we knew, or were capable of; a Change, which in one moment, in the twinkling of an Eye, carries the Soul from small First-fruits to the full Vintage; from a few Drops to a bottomless, boundless Ocean of either Happiness or Vengeance, Delight or Torment. And withal, there leaves him without any possibility of Change or Alteration for ever, but that of its re-union with the Body: for it is such a Change, as leaves the state of the Soul for ever unchangeable. O then, think much and often with your selves, how great a Change Death will make with you? Certainly, did Men think and consider with themselves, how great a Change Death

will

will make with them, when it comes, they would not leave the matters of their Souls in ſuch diſorder and diſcompoſure, in ſuch an unready poſture for it as they do.

Fifthly; Would you indeed ſet all right in your Souls, and make all ready for a dying hour? Then preſently ſet upon Soul-work, without admitting of the leaſt delay or procraſtination upon any account whatſoever: delays and procraſtinations in the work of our Souls and Eternity, is the high-way to Death and Ruine. What was it that ruined the fooliſh Virgins, but their delays in this great Work, and their neglect of the great Concerns of their Souls, till it was too late to mind them? *Mat.* 25. *begin.* *Felix* alſo was in a fair way, and had a fair opportunity before him, to have provided for another World; but he delayed, and his delay (for ought we know) was his Ruine, *Acts* 24. 25. Truly the Heart is very apt to delay and procraſtinate Soul-work: it is apt to cry out, to morrow, to morrow. Hence it is that the Scripture calls ſo often upon us for a ſpeedy engaging in the Work of our Souls; the Scripture ſaith, *Now*, and *to*

day

day: now is the accepted time, now is the day of Salvation, 2 Cor. 6. 2. And *to day if ye will hear his Voice, harden not yours Hearts*, Heb. 3. 7, 8. And if the Scripture ſaith, *now*, why ſhouldſt thou talk of hereafter? If the Scripture ſaith *to day*, why ſhouldſt thou talk of to morrow? *Auſtin* confeſſeth this, and withal tells us, there is ſcarce any end of delays, if once we give way to them: *I delayed* (ſaith he) *to be converted to God, and put off my living to him from day to day.* And elſewhere he tells us, that when God calleth upon him to awake to his Work, he returned nothing but a few ſleepy words; *Anon, Lord* (ſaith he) *Anon; bear with me a little: but this Anon and Anon had no end, and this, bear with me a little, went on a long way.* Take heed of this, this hath been the ruine of thouſands, and ten thouſands: How many have been convinced that it is their Duty, and Intereſt both, to fall in with the Work of God and their Souls, to make preparation for another World? But they have put it off till hereafter, and ſatisfied their Conſciences with Reſolutions hereafter to do ſo and ſo; and have thus loſt their

ſeaſon:

ſeaſon: Oh fall preſently without delay upon Soul-work. And to quicken you a little hereunto, conſider four things.

First; Conſider the unreaſonableneſs of Delays; no juſt plea can be made, nor true account given, why you ſhould delay your Soul-work one moment: the Devil and a Man's own Heart will make many Pleas, but no juſt Plea can be made; they will tell you, it is too ſoon, you are young, and have time enough before you: what need you engage ſo ſoon? But is this a rational Plea? Is it too ſoon to be ſaved, too ſoon to be happy, too ſoon to ſecure your Eternal Intereſt? Is it too ſoon to lay hold on Eternal Life? Is it too ſoon to know and enjoy God? Is it too ſoon to be out of danger of periſhing eternally? Why truly it cannot be too ſoon for theſe things; beſides, God calls for thy Youth, *Remember thy Creator in the days of thy Youth*, Eccleſ. 12. 1. And he greatly values the kindneſs of thy Youth, *Jer.* 2. 2. Again, they will ſuggeſt, that ſuch and ſuch a buſineſs muſt be diſpatched, ſuch a work done and carried off your hands, and then you may attend this Work;

Lord

Lord (ſaith he to *Chriſt*) *I will follow thee*; *but ſuffer me firſt to go and bury my Father.* And ſaith another, *Lord, I will follow thee*; *but firſt let me go and bid them farewell which are at home*, Luke 9. 57, 61. But Friends, let me ask you, if there be any buſineſs to be diſpatched like the buſineſs of your Souls, and Eternity? Is there any thing upon your hand, that is of ſo much worth as your Souls, and of ſo much weight as Eternity? Is there any thing you are ſo nearly concerned to mind, as that which is indeed the one thing neceſſary, even the ſaving of your Souls? Oh! the whole World is nothing to this, and the greateſt Concernments on Earth are but Trifles to this Concern. Again, they will tell you it is an inconvenient Seaſon, and hereafter the Work may be better done and minded by you, than now it can; which was *Felix*'s caſe in the place before mentioned, *Acts* 24. 25. But hearken Soul, art thou ſure of another Seaſon? And art thou ſure that that will be a more convenient Seaſon? Surely no: if it be not convenient to day, thou mayeſt fear it will be leſs convenient to morrow; that Devil and deceitful Heart that tells

tells thee it is not convenient now, will make proviſion that it ſhall be leſs convenient hereafter. O therefore, break through all theſe pleas, and fall ſpeedily upon Soul-work.

Secondly, Conſider the danger of Delays: Delays in this caſe are exceeding dangerous; one day's, yea (for any thing I know) one hour's delay herein, may prove thine eternal undoing; it may prove the loſs of Chriſt, the loſs of Heaven, the loſs of thy Soul, and all for ever. Alas! Art thou ſure thou ſhalt live one day, one hour more in this World? for ought thou knoweſt, the next moment thou goeſt down into the Grave, *Job* 21. 13. But in caſe thou ſhouldſt live longer in the World, art thou ſure the Goſpel, and the means of Grace ſhall be continued to thee? If thou ſhouldſt not be taken from the World, yet the Goſpel may be taken from thee; though the day of thy Life may laſt a while longer, yet the day Goſpel-Grace and Mercy, may ſuddenly expire: and if that be once gone, all the Tenders of Chriſt, all the Offers of Grace, all the Exhibitions of Life and Salvation are gone; if the Goſpel be once gone, thy Seaſon is

gone

gone, and thy Soul is gone, and thy Salvation is gone, and that for ever; therefore, ſaith the Apoſtle, *Now is the accepted time*, ſpeaking of the day of Goſpel-Mercy, *Now is the day of Salvation*, 2 *Cor.* 6. 2. Or, grant thou ſhouldſt live, and the Goſpel ſhould be continued to thee, as to the outward means; yet art thou ſure that the day and ſeaſon of Grace will laſt any longer than this preſent moment? Remember that ſad word which the Lord breathed out with Tears in his Eyes, over neglecting *Jeruſalem*, Luke 19. 43. *O that thou hadſt known, at leaſt in this thy day, the things that belong to thy Peace! but now they are hid from thine Eyes.* Alas! how ſoon may God withdraw his Spirit from thee? how ſoon may he call home his grieved Spirit from thy neglecting, reſiſting Soul, once for all, ſaying, My Spirit ſhall ſtrive no more with that Man? *Gen.* 6. 3. How ſoon may God ſeal thee up under judicial Blindneſs and hardneſs of Heart, ſo that thou ſhalt never be able to believe, or to do any thing for the good of thy Soul, in order to another World? Thou talkeſt of to morrow, and of hereafter; but who knows, but that before

to

to morrow, God may clap the Seal of an hard Heart, and a blind Mind upon thee? ſo as that though thou ſhouldſt live a thouſand Years and withall enjoy the faireſt means that ever any Soul enjoyed; yet thou ſhouldſt be never able to believe or repent, to do any thing for the working out of thy Salvation. It is often times his way of proceeding with neglecting, delaying ones, *Iſa.* 6. 10. *Job* 11. 39, 40. Or how ſoon may the Oath of God go forth againſt thee? Thou talkeſt of to morrow; but alas! who knows but that before to morrow, *God may ſwear in his Wrath, thou ſhalt not enter into his Reſt?* It is what is threatned againſt ſuch as will not hear his Voice to day, but harden their Hearts againſt him, *Heb.* 3. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. There is a time when God's Oath goeth forth againſt Souls and ſuch and ſuch Sinners, for their contempt and neglect of *Chriſt* and *Grace*; a time not only when *God* ſaith, but ſweareth, and that in Wrath, that they ſhall never enter into his Reſt; and if once God's Oath is gone out againſt a Man, that Man is paſt recovery: then farewell Chriſt, and Heaven, and Soul, and all for ever. O how dangerous are Delays! therefore take

take heed of them, and fall presently upon Soul-work.

Thirdly, Consider the disadvantage of delays. Delays herein are disadvantagious, as well as dangerous. Indeed, were there no danger in them (I mean as to the Eternal State) yet the disadvantage of them is so great, as if rightly considered, might be enough to antidote the Soul against them; and engage it presently in the Work which relates to another World. Pray consider it a little; by Delays the Soul loseth much sweet Communion with *Christ*, and many a blessed Communication of Love from him which he might enjoy: the sooner we fall upon the Work of Heaven and Eternity, the sooner we come to a taste and beginning of Heaven, and a blessed Eternity in our Souls: O the sweet Embraces, the blessed Discoveries, the glorious Incomes of Love and Delight that the Soul loses by his Delays to get into *Christ*, and to walk with *God*, and to mind Eternal Concernments! Poor Soul, by thy Delays thou hast lived upon Husks and Swill all thy days hitherto, whereas thou mightest have eaten Bread in thy Father's House, and drunk Wine

new

new in thy Father's Kingdom: thou haſt lived on the muddy, dungy, droſſie delights of Sin and the Creature, whereas thou mighteſt have ſolaced and delighted thy Soul with thoſe Chryſtal Streams of undefiled Pleaſures, which are at Chriſt's and his Father's right hand. Beſides; by Delays, the Work of thy Soul grows more difficult; hereby Corruption grows more ſtrong, and the Heart grows more hard: by every day's delay, the old Enmity ſtrengthens it ſelf, and the Soul is more and more ſettled upon its Lees. For accuſtomedneſs in ſinning, hardens the Heart in Sin, as is hinted, *Jer.* 13. 23. Every day the Soul is more alienated from Chriſt, and hardned againſt him. At beſt, if thy Soul doth at laſt come to ſee its need of Chriſt, and deſireth to cloſe with him, and to mind the Work and Concerns of another World; yet the longer thou delayeſt this Buſineſs, the greater Temptations thou wilt have to get over: for, though now thy Heart ſaith it is too ſoon, yet after a few days delay, it will ſay it is too late; it will be apt to conclude that now thy day is over, and now Chriſt will have nothing to do with thee:

thee: O why ſhouldſt thou be ſuch an Enemy to thy own Soul, as to run it upon theſe diſadvantages? Rather avoid them, by falling preſently upon Soul-work.

Fourthly; Conſider the ſinfulneſs of Delays, and the horrible guilt they bring upon the Soul: as Delays are dangerous and diſadvantagious, ſo they are ſinful too, exceeding ſinful, and provoking to the God of Heaven. The truth is, were there no danger in them, no diſadvantage by them to the Soul; yet the ſinfulneſs of them is ſuch, as ſhould make us afraid of them: In every days Delay to mind and purſue Soul-work, there is poſitive Rebellion and Diſobedience to the Will and Command of God: For the Command is, *To day if ye will hear his Voice, harden not your Hearts*, Heb. 3. 7, 8. By delaying therefore, thou rebelleſt againſt the Commandment. In every days delay to mind and purſue Soul-work, there is horrible unkindneſs and ingratitude to God and Chriſt; which ſurely is a black Sin, and brings great Guilt upon the Soul. God ſpares you time after time, when he might caſt you off the next moment:

and

and this he doth, that you may purſue the Work of your Souls and Eternity: and O what unkindneſs, what ingratitude muſt it be in us to neglect, and put off this Work? in every delay to mind and purſue Soul-work there is much contempt of Chriſt and Grace; and this is that which makes it to be exceeding ſinful: Chriſt offers himſelf, and his Grace to you, he offers you Life, he offers you Peace, he offers you Pardon, he offers you Righteouſneſs, he offers you Strength, he offers you all the Treaſures of Heaven; and withall calls upon you to accept theſe offers, and to take home theſe things to your ſelves; but you, by your Delays, pour Contempt upon all; you in effect ſay, neither Chriſt, nor his Grace, neither Chriſt, nor the purchaſe of his Blood, are worth minding, worth looking after. Oh what Contempt is this? and what Sin is this? By Delays you do in effect ſay, there is ſomething better than Chriſt, and ſomething of greater Concernment to you than Salvation by Chriſt; you plainly ſay, that indeed you will have Chriſt hereafter, and Salvation hereafter, but for the preſent, you had much rather have

your Lusts and Worldly Pleasures, Oh! tremble at the thoughts of this, and let it affright you out of your delays, and put you immediately upon Soul-work. In a word, never any pretended that they minded the Concerns of their Souls, Union with *Christ*, walking with God, making sure their Calling and Election so soon, many have repented that they have minded these things so late. I remember a bitter complaint of *Austin* in his Book of Confessions, *I have loved thee too late*, saith he, *O thou so ancient, and yet so new a Beauty, I have loved thee too late.* He bewails that he had so long laid out his Love upon the Creature, and not given *Christ* his Love. Could you ask all the Saints in Heaven, whether ever they repented that they minded the Work of Christ, and their Souls, so soon? they would tell you no, they repented of nothing but that they minded it so late. Once more therefore let me call upon you, to fall immediately upon Soul-work, and never rest till thy Heart cries out to God as *Austin* did, when God had really shewed him himself, and made him sensible of his Sins; *When God*, saith he, *had shewed*

m

me my Sin and Miſery, there aroſe a great ſtorm within me, which carried with it a great ſhower of Tears; and indeed, I let looſe the Reins to Tears, crying out to God in ſuch words as theſe; O Lord, how long, how long wilt thou be angry? How long ſhall it be ſaid, to morrow, and to morrow? Wherefore may it not be now? Why may there not an end be put to my Sin and Filthineſs this very hour? And indeed, God made that very ſeaſon, the ſeaſon of his Converſion: So labour, to ſee thy Sin and Miſery ſo far, as thou mayſt cry out with a holy reſtleſneſs to God, How long ſhall it be to morrow, and to morrow? Why may it not be turned to thee now? Why may not my Soul be engaged in the Work of Heaven and Eternity now?

Fifthly; Would you indeed ſet all right in your Souls, and make all ready for a dying hour? then be much and importunate with God in Prayer, to teach you ſo to number your days, as to apply your Hearts to Wiſdom: This I ground upon *Pſalm* 90. 12. where *Moſes* the Man of God is found in this practice. *Lord* (ſaith he) *teach us ſo to number our days, that we may apply our Hearts*

unto Wiſdom; *To number our days, is not to number them in an Arithmetical, but a Spiritual way*; *it is not to caſt up how many days the Life of Man conſiſts of, that is eaſily done: but it is ſpiritually and practically to conſider, and lay to heart, the ſhortneſs and uncertainty of our Lives, together with the various Miſeries and Calamities that do attend them.* So *Mollerus.* It is ſeriouſly and fiducially to contemplate the vanity of Life, as ſhort and uncertain, and as attended with Sorrows, Miſeries, and innumerable Troubles, and to apply thy Heart to Wiſdom; 'Tis to make Religion, and the Work of a Man's Soul, his main buſineſs, it is to make it his great buſineſs, and endeavour to get an Intereſt in God and Chriſt, in the Covenant of Grace and Eternal Life; and in time to provide for, and make ſure of a bleſſed Eternity; it is to ſet a Man's whole Soul to the Work of God, and his own Salvation. Now, as ever you would indeed make ready for a dying hour, beg of God to teach you thus to number your days, and thus to apply your Hearts to Wiſdom. There are two things I would obſerve, and ſo cloſe this.

Firſt, That ſuch a numbring of our days

days, is what the beſt of Saints need, and may make great uſe of. *Moſes* was a very holy Man, and he looked upon it as a Work uſeful, and of great Importance to him, to contemplate the vanity of Life, and to think of the ſhortneſs and uncertainty of his abode here; the moſt holy Souls need this; the moſt holy Souls need humbling, they need weaning from this World, they need quickning unto Duty, they need to have their Hearts awakened, to mind Heaven, and a future Life, and the right numbring of our days is that which greatly conduceth hereunto.

Secondly, Obſerve, That as this is a Work needful and uſeful for the beſt of Saints to be employed in; ſo it is a work above their own Strength, and that which they need Divine Aſſiſtance to enable them unto. *Moſes* was an eminently holy Man, and yet as he ſaw he had need of this, ſo he ſaw it was a Work above his power; and therefore he goes to God, and puts in himſelf amongſt the reſt, and prays for his teachings herein. Let us do likewiſe, let us lie much at the foot of God for his teachings, whereby we may be enabled

so to number our days, as thus to apply our Hearts unto Wisdom; beg him to make us see the vanity and uncertainty of our Lives, and that so, as effectually to engage us to make out after a better Life.

CHAP. VIII.

Wherein more particular Helps and Directions are laid down, in order to the setting of things right, and making all ready for a dying hour.

BUT I would come nearer this great Business, and give you some more particular Directions, in order to your making all ready for a dying hour. And,

First; Would you indeed have all things right in the matters of your Souls for a dying hour? Then get into Christ, get Union with Christ, and an Interest in Christ by believing. Union with *Christ* and an Interest in *Christ* is most requisite and necessary to fit and prepare us for a dying hour; and without we have it, we can have nothing set right, nothing in order, nothing in readiness for

for that hour. You know how the Scripture ſpeaks, *He that hath the Son hath Life: but he that hath not the Son of God hath not Life*, 1 John 5. 12. and *there is no Condemnation to them which are in Chriſt Jeſus*, Rom. 8. 1. O my Beloved, we ſhall live or die, be ſaved, or damned for ever, according as we do or do not get a Union with Chriſt, and an Intereſt in Chriſt. This is that which lies at the bottom and foundation of all, of all our Hopes, and of all our Mercies, of all our Comforts, of all our Acceptation and Communion with God, of all Grace on Earth, and all Glory in Heaven: and without it, whatſoever our Attainments in Religion are, whatever our Profeſſion may be, whatever place or eſteem we may have in the Church of God, though never ſo raiſed and eminent, yet we have not any thing that will avail us in a dying hour. I remember a ſaying of a Learned Man, *That thou mayſt live in Death*, ſaith he, *get into* Chriſt, *implant thy ſelf into* Chriſt *by believing. Faith joyns and unites us to* Chriſt, *and they that are in* Chriſt *cannot die, for* Chriſt *is their Life.* And indeed, if we have Union with *Chriſt*, he

will be Life in Death it ſelf to us: *Bleſſed are the Dead which die in the Lord*; that is, die, having Union with Chriſt, being implanted into Chriſt, *Rev.* 14. 13. If we have Union with Chriſt, he will not be only Life in Death to us, but he will even turn Death it ſelf into Life; the King of Terrors into a King of Comforts; inſomuch that the Soul ſhall be able to triumph over it, as the Apoſtle doth, 1 *Cor.* 15. 55, 56, 57. Whereas without this, without Union with Chriſt, and an Intereſt in Chriſt, we ſhall never be able to look Death in the face with Comfort, but ſhall, when we come to die, be ſome of the miſerableſt Spectacles in the World. It is the Speech of a worthy Divine, who is long ſince gone hence, *A Chriſtleſs dying Man or Woman* (ſaith he) *is one of the ſaddeſt Spectacles in the World*: For a Man to be dying, and not Chriſtleſs, that is comfortable; for ſuch a one dies but to live for ever, he dies the Death of Nature, to live the Life of Glory; for a Man to be Chriſtleſs, and not dying, is ſomething tolerable: for who knows, but that the next meeting at an Ordinance, may be the time of God's Love to

him

him of drawing him into Christ? but for a Man to be dying and Christless; Christless and dying too, that is intolerable, that is terrible indeed; for such an one dies to be damned, and he is going off from all hopes and possibilities of Mercy for ever: Oh therefore above all, press after Union with Christ, and an Interest in Christ: this was *Paul*'s great care and sollicitude to the very last, that so he might go off the Stage with Comfort; and that for which he *accounted all things but Dung*, as most base and vile, *Phil.* 3. 8, 9. O Soul, didst thou indeed know and consider of how much weight and importance an Interest in Christ is to thee with reference to thine eternal Happiness, thou wouldst cry out as eagerly for Christ, as *Rachel* did for her Children, saying, Give me Christ, or else I die; give me Union with Christ, and an Interest in Christ, or I am undone eternally. Oh look to the great uniting Act of Faith, make a right choice of Christ; chuse him as your Lord and Head, your King and Saviour, and renew your choice of him every day, resigning up your selves entirely to him, to be saved and governed by him in his own way.

Secondly; Would you indeed have all set right, and made ready in the matters of your Souls for a dying hour? Then press after a firm and unshaken assurance of an Interest in God, and his Love, and of your right and title to Eternal Life, of another, and better Life than this is here. Without some good evidence for Heaven, and some well-grounded assurance of an Interest in God and Eternal Life, things are not ready with us, nor are we in such a preparedness for a dying hour, as we ought to be. Though a Man have an Interest in God and his Love; though he hath a right and title to Eternal Life and Happiness; yet as long as he is in the dark, and at an uncertainty in his own Soul about it, things are out of order with him, and he is greatly unready for a dying hour: For pray mark, as your interest in this is requisite to our dying happily; so the light and assurance of that Interest, is requisite to our dying comfortably. Indeed, when a Man hath attained to some good evidence for Heaven, to some well-grounded assurance of his Interest in God and Christ, then are things in a good posture with him in reference to

a

a dying hour; then he can play with Death, and triumph over it; as *Job* did, when he could ſay, *I know that my Redeemer liveth*, Job 19. 25, 26. And as the Apoſtle ſeems to ſpeak of it, 2 *Cor.* 5. 12. *We know that when our Earthly Houſe of this Tabernacle ſhall be diſſolved, we have a building of God, an Houſe not made with hands, Eternal in the Heavens: for this we groan earneſtly, deſiring to be cloathed upon with our Houſe which is from Heaven.* None of you do comfortably leave your Houſe unleſs you have another to go unto; much leſs can you comfortably quit this World, unleſs you have ſome well grounded aſſurance of another and a better Life. Take a Man that is in the dark, and at a loſs as to his Intereſt in God and Chriſt, and he knows not what Death will do to him, nor where it will lodge him, whether in Heaven or Hell, whether upon the Throne of Glory, or in the Priſon of Eternal Darkneſs, in the Boſom of *Chriſt*'s Love, or under the Revelation of his infinite and eternal Wrath: and is ſuch a one ready for a dying hour? ſurely no. As ever therefore you would have things right and ready within indeed for a dying

hour,

hour, you must press after an assurance of your Interest in God and Christ; you must do as the Apostle exhorts, *Give all diligence to make your Calling and Election sure*, 2 Pet. 1. 10. You must every day press after a fuller and firmer assurance as to your Eternal Interest: You must be much in Faith, much in Prayer, much in examining your Evidences, much in proving your State, much in looking after the Seal and Evidences of the blessed Spirit: which is indeed all in all; and never rest till you can say, my Lord, and my God, my Heaven, my Glory; *God is the rock of my Heart, and my Portion for ever.* O then all will be sweet and well with you. This is that which the Saints of old have laboured after with their whole might: *Say unto my Soul* (saith *David* to God) *I am thy Salvation*, Psalm 35. 3. *Set me as a Seal upon thy Heart, and a Seal upon thine Arm*, Cant. 8. 6. This *Austin* pressed much after, *Lord*, saith he, *Tell me what thou art to me? Say unto my Soul, I am thy Salvation; so say it, that I may hear it: Behold, the Ears of my Heart are before thee; open them, O Lord and say unto my Soul, I am thy Salvation.* O my Beloved, this is worth pressing

ſing after, for this is the welcomeſt News a poor Soul can poſſibly hear, to be told that God is his, and Heaven is his, and Eternal Life is his: and when once this News is come, then welcome Life, and welcome Death; welcome Time, and welcome Eternity: then the *Soul* can ſay, O ſweet Eternity, O bleſſed Eternity! O Sirs, be not ſatisfied without ſome good aſſurance of God's Love to your Souls, and your right and title to Heaven and Eternal Life! Yea, without the fulleſt Aſſurance that is attainable here; for know, that there are degrees in Aſſurance it ſelf. The Scripture mentions three degrees of Aſſurance. Firſt, there is aſſurance, *The Work of Righteouſneſs is Peace, and the fruit of Righteouſneſs is Aſſurance for ever*, Iſa.31.17. And, *Give all diligence to make your Calling and Election ſure*; as in the place before quoted. Secondly, there is much Aſſurance: *Our Goſpel came unto you, not in Word only, but in Power and in the Demonſtration of the Spirit, and much Aſſurance*, 1 Theſ. 1.5. Thirdly, there is a full Aſſurance, *We deſire that every one of you do ſhew the ſame diligence, to the full aſſurance of Hope unto the end*, Heb.6.11. Now, my

Beloved,

Beloved, I would not have you satisfied without assurance, without much assurance, yea, without a full assurance; the more full your assurance is, the more chearfully, joyfully, and triumphantly will you die.

Thirdly; Would you indeed have all right, all in order in the matter of your Souls for a dying hour? Then labour to maintain a constant actual Peace with God; every day making even with him, and renewing the sense of his pardoning Love in your Souls as a firm Union with Christ, and a well-grounded assurance of an Interest in God, and Eternal Life; so also, an actual Peace with God, and a daily renewed pardon from Him, is requisite to a thorough readiness and preparedness for a dying hour. *David* had an Interest in God; yea, and his Interest was clear to him; yet how sollicitous was he to get all even before God and him? and how uncomfortable was it with him, till he had renewed his Peace with God, when by his fall it had been broken? *Psalm* 51. 8, 12. This also is what is evidently held forth, *Job* 7. 21. where *Job* pleads thus with God; *Why dost*

thou

thou not pardon mine Iniquity, and take away my Tranſgreſſion? For now ſhall I ſleep in the Duſt; thou ſhalt ſeek me in the Morning, but I ſhall not be. In the Verſe before, he acknowledged he had ſinned, and here he intimates, that God frowned on him for his Sin; the ſenſe of pardoning Love was not renewed in his Soul, which here therefore he pleads for, and that upon this account, becauſe he was ſpeedily to die; intimating he could not die with Comfort, till he had a renewed ſenſe of God's pardoning Love. And this is the very thing which *David* begs in the *Pſalm* of my Text, in order to his comfortable going hence, (*viz.*) that *God would take away his Tranſgreſſion*, Pſalm 39. 8. As long as there is any Sin, any Guilt lying upon our Conſciences, any Sin unpardoned, any difference between God and us; any frowns in his Face towards us; we are unready for Death, and cannot with that comfort and boldneſs of Spirit welcome it as we ought; but when our Peace with God is maintained, and we have a renewed ſenſe of his pardoning Love in our Souls, then are things right and in order with us indeed

deed: and we may think of Death with Boldneſs and Comfort, and therefore mind this, as ever you would be found ready for a dying hour; every day even things between God and you: every day get a freſh ſenſe of Pardon from him.

Firſt, As near as poſſible may be, do nothing that may occaſion any breach between God and you, or raiſe any Frowns in his Face towards you: if you do not break with God, he will not break with you: all breaches, as to Peace and Friendſhip between God and us, begin on our part; yea, neither will God break with us for little things, in caſe they be not allowed by us, but watched and ſtriven againſt; therefore, as near as poſſible you can, do nothing to break and interrupt your Peace with God for one moment. And becauſe when you have done all, many things may and will fall out (we having ſinful ſinning Hearts, and living in a World of Snares and Temptations) for which God may juſtly frown upon us: Let us,

Secondly, Every day make even with him: In the cloſe of every day let us con-

conſider wherein we have broken with God, come ſhort of Duty, given any Grief, any Diſtaſte to his Holy Spirit; and by Faith and Prayer let us ſue out the Pardon of it; and let us not lie down, if poſſible, without ſome intimation of his pardoning Love. For which end,

Firſt, We ſhould act Faith on the Blood and Advocateſhip of Jeſus Chriſt, *Whom God hath ſet forth to be a Propitiation, through Faith in his Blood, to declare his Righteouſneſs for remiſſion of Sins*, Rom. 3. 24, 25. And indeed Chriſt hath ſet up a ſtanding Office in Heaven, which we may call the Pardon-Office; he procureth new Pardons for his People daily under their new Sins; *We have an Advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the Righteous, and he is the Propitiation for our Sins*, 1 John 2. 1, 2. Have daily recourſe to the Blood of Chriſt; truly without it there's no living; the beſt, the holieſt on Earth have daily need of his Blood, and ſhould have daily recourſe unto it, for the maintaining of their Peace, and for the renewing of God's pardoning Love in their Souls.

Secondly, We ſhould be humbly and earneſtly

earneſtly importunate with God in Prayer, reſolving not to let him go without his Bleſſing, carrying upon our Spirits the ſenſe of the worth, and alſo of our unworthineſs of it. Thus the Holy Men of God of old have done: they have ſued out the pardon of their Sins by Faith and Prayer, and gotten a freſh ſenſe of God's Love when they have broken with him; as I might inſtance in *Job*, in *David*, and others. We ſhould every day pray, as that Father did, *O Lord*, ſaith he, *do not after the manner of a Judg, weigh or conſider what I have done, what I have ſpoken, what I have thought; but blot out all my Sins with thy own Blood.* And as another of them did, *Lord*, ſaith he, *there is that in me which may offend thy holy Eyes, I know and confeſs it: but who ſhall cleanſe me? Or, to whom ſhall I flie for relief, but to thee? O hide not thy Face from me.* Truly, when we have walked moſt watchfully, moſt circumſpectly; many things may, and will fall out, that may offend the pure Eyes of God's Glory, which we ſhould confeſs and bewail before him, ſuing out the pardon of them by the Blood of his Son. Some of the Saints have made this

this their daily Practice, and so have maintained their Peace for many Years together; and when they have come to die, have gloriously triumphed over Death; and have gone off the stage with much Comfort; and so should we.

Fourthly; Would you indeed have all right? All in order in your Souls for a dying hour? Then be true and faithful to your own Consciences, that you may have them for you, and not against you, both while you live, and when you die. Conscience (my Beloved) is *Christ's* Deputy or Vicegerent in the *Soul*; it is both a Judg and a Witness for *God* within us; it either *Accuses* or *Excuses*, Acquits or Condemns, *Rom.* 2. 15. And and according as *Conscience* is either for us, or against us; so we are either ready, or not ready; prepared, or not prepared for Death and Judgment: If we have the Witness and Judgment of our *Consciences* for us, then have we boldness and comfort both in Life and Death; then we can welcome Death's approach to us; but if the Witness and Judgment of *Conscience* be against us, then *Death* cannot but be terrible to us: *This is*

our

our rejoycing (saith the Apostle) *the Testimony of our Consciences, that in simplicity and Godly Sincerity, not in Fleshly Wisdom, but by the Grace of God, we have had our Conversation in the World*, 2 Cor. 1. 12. And again, *If our Hearts condemn us, God is greater than our Hearts, and knoweth all things; but if our Hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God*, 1 John 3. 21. Oh, my Beloved, as a Peace with God, so a sound and holy Peace with a Man's own *Conscience* (that is to say, to have the witness and judgment of a Man's Conscience for him, and not against him) is highly requisite for a right disposing and preparing of us for a dying hour. As ever therefore you would have all ready, and in order against such an hour, mind this, and look after this; be sure you carry it so to your own *Consciences*, as that you may have them always for you, and not against you, while you live; and for you, and not against you, when you come to die. In order to which, mind these two things:

First; Labour to get your *Consciences* well enlightned and informed, and be much with *God* in Prayer in order thereto;

thereto; beg and implore God for a true and faithful *Conſcience*, a *Conſcience* that will bear a true and faithful witneſs in your Souls, and that will paſs a right Judgment upon things, both upon your State and Actions. In *Heb.* 10. 21. we reade of a *true Heart*, or a true *Conſcience*, that is, a *Conſcience* rightly informed, a *Conſcience* that bears a true and faithful witneſs, and that paſſeth a true and faithful Judgment upon things: ſuch a *Conſcience* ſhould we beg of *God*, and labour by all means poſſible to attain unto. Oh, my Beloved, it is a dangerous thing to have an erroneous *Conſcience*, a miſtaking *Conſcience*, a *Conſcience* not rightly informed; For pray mark, This is what leaves a Man under a neceſſity of ſinning, and ſo of grieving the *Spirit* of God on the one hand, and it endangereth his Peace and Comfort on the other hand; for having an erroneous *Conſcience*, whether we obey it, or obey it not, we ſin; if we obey it, we ſin, becauſe *Conſcience* commands what is not agreeable to the Word of *God*; if we obey it not, we ſin, becauſe we rebel againſt the Light and Dictates of *Conſcience*, omitting that

which Conſcience tells us is a Dut
though it be not a Duty; or do th
which Conſcience tells us is a Sin, thoug
it be not a Sin; labour therefore to g
your Conſciences well informed and en
lightned.

Secondly; Be ſure you do nothin
againſt the light and dictates of Conſc
ence, being rightly informed, but obe
it in all things. In *Job* 24. 13. we rea
of ſome that *rebel againſt the Light*, tha
is, that do ſin againſt their own Conſc
ences; which is a double Sin, a Si
cloathed with great Aggravations, an
greatly diſcompoſeth us for a dyin
hour: But we muſt take heed of thi
and liſten to the voice of Conſcienc
Conſcience regulated by the Word
God: *God* ſpeaks to us by our Conſc
ences, he ſpeakes to us through his Wo
by our Conſciences, and he ſpeaks to u
through his Providence by our Conſc
ences, and we ſhould take heed of vi
lating the Dictates, or ſpeaking of Co
ſcience in the leaſt. Doth not Conſcien
many times tell us, ſuch and ſuch way
which we walk in are not good, an
muſt be turned from, or we are undo
for ever? And now we ſhould be tru

and faithful to our own Conſciences, and ſpeedily turn from thoſe ways; we ſhould have nothing to do with any thing that Conſcience condemns us in, and for. Again, doth not Conſcience many times tell you, that ſuch and ſuch Duties are totally neglected, or elſe ſeldom or ſlightly performed by you, which yet you ought to be converſant and diligent in the performance of? Now you ſhould herein alſo be faithful and true to your own Conſciences; living up to the conſtant, diligent, ſpiritual performance of thoſe Duties. Again, doth not Conſcience many times tell you, that things are not right with you? that it is an evil frame of Spirit you live in? that you are too carnal, too light, too vain, too frothy, too eager in your purſuits of this World, and to remiſs in your purſuits of Heaven and Eternity? Now as ever you would be ready for a dying hour, you ſhould be faithful to your own Conſcience, ſetting that right which is amiſs, and haſtening out of that evil Frame in the contrary gracious Frame. (O my Beloved) if you be true and faithful to Conſcience, Conſcience will be true and faithful to you, wit-

witneſſing for you, and not againſt you, both while you live, and when you die. In a word, In all things labour to keep a good *Conſcience*; this was *Paul*'s great care and exerciſe, *Acts* 24. 16. *Herein do I exerciſe my ſelf, to have alway a Conſcience void of Offence towards God, and towards Man:* O this will be a ſweet and bleſſed Exerciſe, and the more we are found in it while we live, the more Comfort will it afford us when we come to die.

Fifthly; Would you indeed have all things right, and in order in the matters of your Souls, when a dying hour comes; Then labour for much Purity of Heart and Life, and by no means admit of any Sin, any Corruption whatſoever; the more pure and holy we are, the more ready we are, and in the better poſture things are with us for a dying hour: *Without Holineſs*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *no Man ſhall ſee God*, Heb. 12. 14. Holineſs is neceſſary unto Happineſs; Holineſs is the way unto Happineſs; Holineſs is what fits and prepares us for Happineſs, and brings us unto Happineſs; yea Holineſs is a part of our Happineſs, a great part of the Happineſs of Heaven it

ſelf lies in Holineſs; accordingly the more holy we are, the more we are ſuited to, and prepared for the future Happineſs, and ſo for Death and Judgment: For that which prepares us for the future Happineſs, that alſo prepares us for Death, which is but an in-let into that Happineſs for ever: Therefore if you would have all things right, all things ready indeed for a dying hour, then labour for the exacteſt Purity and Holineſs that poſſibly you can: This is that which the Apoſtle aims at, and prays for, on the behalf of the *Theſſalonians*, as moſt conducing to the preparing of them for their latter end, 1 *Theſ.* 3. 12, 13. *And the Lord make you to abound and encreaſe in Love one towards another, and towards all Men, even as we do towards you, to the end he may eſtabliſh your Hearts unblameable in Holineſs before God, even our Father, at the coming of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt with all his Saints.* The poſture he would have them to be in at the coming of Chriſt, is the poſture of unblameable Holineſs, which indeed is the beſt and readieſt poſture. The ſame things he prays for, in order to the ſame end, in 1 *Theſſ.* 5. 23. *And the very*

very God of Peace ſanctifie you wholly, and I pray God that your whole Spirit, Soul and Body be preſerved blameleſs unto the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. This is that alſo which that other Apoſtle enjoyns in order hereunto, 2 *Pet.* 3. 14. *Be diligent, that ye may be found of him in Peace, without Spot, and Blameleſs.* The more ſpotleſs and blameleſs we are in our Spirits and Ways, the more ready we are for Death and Judgment. Oh preſs after an eminency in Holineſs, admitting of none, no not the leaſt taint or tincture of Sin, or ſinful Defilement upon any terms whatſoever! Unholy Souls are unready Souls; they are unready for Death, unready for Judgment, unready for the future Life: and for Men to talk of being ready for theſe, and yet be unholy, is the greateſt folly in the World: therefore labour for much Purity and Holineſs.

Firſt, Labour for much Purity and Holineſs in your Lives and Walkings: this is what God indeſpenſably calls for, 1 *Pet.* 1. 15, 16. *As he that hath called you is holy, ſo be ye holy in all manner of Converſation: becauſe it is written, Be ye Holy, for I am Holy.* We ſhould preſs after

after universal Holiness: there should be a Vein and a Tincture of Holiness run through all we do, even our Civil as well as our Religious Actions; we should as near as possible, be dedicated and devoted to God, and our Lives should be Lives of walking with him. They and they only, who walk with God while they live, are those who will be found ready to live with God when they come to die. As for all careless licencious ones, let them never talk of being ready for Death and the future Life; for they are at an utter distance from any such thing: indeed ready they are, but for what? ready for Hell, ready for the Wrath of God, ready for Destruction: but they are not at all ready for a Blessed Eternity. The Apostle weeps over such, as being indeed thus ready, Phil. 3. 18, 19. *Many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are Enemies to the Cross of Christ; whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, whose Glory is their Shame, who mind Earthly Things.* Many there are who profess and hope well of themselves, as to another Life, who yet are loose and carnal, wicked and licen-

tious in their Lives and Walkings: they do not watch and keep their Garments, but wallow in the mire of their Lusts and Pollutions: they stain their Profession with foul, gross, and scandalous Sins; at least they live and allow themselves in some secret way and haunt of sinning, indulging this and the other Lust: But (my Beloved) these are far indeed from being ready for a dying hour; and must expect to be cast off from God and Christ for ever. Such were those, *Mat.* 7. 22, 23. *They came and cried, Lord, Lord:* came with their gifts, parts, and priviledges; but Christ sent them away, with a *Depart from me ye workers of Iniquity.* So in *Jer.* 7. and beginning: We reade of some that made profession of God and his Ways, and yet walked in Sin, and wallowed in all manner of Abomination: And what is the issue? Verse the 15*th.* saith God, *I will cast you out of my sight:* God will at last cast off all loose, licentious Walkers; *Psalm* 21. 9. *David* prays thus, *Gather not my Soul with Sinners.* And truly, if you would not be gathered with Sinners at last, you must not walk in Sin with Sinners now: and as for the

Saints

Saints themſelves, ſo far as they let down their Watch, and neglect their walking with God: ſo far as they give way to a looſe, vain, heedleſs way of living; ſo far they have things out of order with them, and they are unready for a dying hour. *Behold, I come as a Thief* (ſaith Chriſt) *bleſſed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his Garments, leſt he walk naked, and they ſee his ſhame*, Rev. 16. 15. So far as the Saints carry it unbecoming their High and Holy Profeſſion, (which is too too frequent with them) ſo far they are ſhort of that complete Readineſs for Death and Eternity they ſhould preſs after.

Secondly, Labour for much Purity and Holineſs in your Hearts and Affections. We muſt be pure and holy within as well as without; in our Hearts and Affections, as well as in our Lives and Walkings, if we would have all right indeed for a dying hour. *Who ſhall aſcend into the Hill of the Lord? And who ſhall ſtand in his Holy Place?* The anſwer is, *He that hath clean Hands, and a pure Heart*, Pſal. 24. 3, 4. And *Chriſt* expreſly tells us, *Bleſſed are the pure in Heart, for they ſhall ſee God*, Mat. 5. 8. Indeed

impure Hearts are unfit to see God: H is a pure and holy God, nor may in pure-hearted Ones expect that bless Sight. I remember a saying which have read in one of the Ancients (which I look upon to be a great Say ing) *Wo and alas! O Lord* (saith he *how preposterous is it? How rash and un advised? How inordinate? How remo from the rule of the Word of thy Tru and Wisdom, for a Man to desire to s God with an unclean Heart?* Oh, have watchful Eye upon your Hearts: an labour to keep them as free from an taint and tincture of Sin as possibly yo can.

First, Be sure you suffer no Lust to ge up into the Throne, where it is too of ten found. When Sin is consented t by the Will, the Lust is on the Throne in the Heart; and indeed it is wonderful to think, how soon one or another Cor ruption will mount up into the Throne in the Soul, if we let down our watch but a little: But Oh, take heed of this; so far as any one Lust whatsoever is pre dominant within us, so far we are mar vellously unready for a dying hour. And not only so: But,

Secondly,

Secondly, Watch narrowly againſt the very firſt riſings and motions of Sin within; nip Luſt, if poſſible, in the very Bud and Bloſſom. It is true, this calls upon us to have a very curious Eye upon our Hearts, and indeed, ſuch an Eye we ſhould have upon them, we muſt have upon them, if we mean to be Chriſtians indeed. Grace will teach a Man, not only to oppoſe the Acts of Sin, and to watch againſt the reign of any Heart-Luſt; but alſo to oppoſe the very firſt motions and riſings of Sin in the Soul: And the more you do this, the better poſture you are in for a dying hour.

CHAP. IX.

A further Direction in order to a complete Preparation for Death, to preſs after the nobleſt ſtrains of Grace. Several of theſe pointed at, and inſiſted on, as tending hereunto.

Sixthly, WOuld you indeed have all ready, and in order in your Souls for a dying hour? Then

reſt not in low and ordinary, but aſpi
after the higheſt and nobleſt ſtrains
Grace. The better to underſtand th
you muſt know, That there are ſom
higher and more noble ſtrains of Gra
than ordinary; ſtrains of Grace, th
carry a peculiar Glory and Excellenc
in them, and do in an eminent man
ner delight the Heart of God: indee
every ſtrain of Grace, even the lea
and loweſt, has a beauty and glory i
it, and is a pleaſure to God's Heart
The leaſt dram of Godly Sorrow, th
leaſt holy Awe of God, and trembling
at his Word, the leaſt breathing of Lov
and Deſire towards him, the leaſt lean
ing upon him, in a way of Hope an
Dependance; Oh, it has a great Glor
in it, and is a delight to God's Soul;
*The Lord taketh pleaſure in them that
fear him, in them that hope in his Mercy*,
Pſalm 147. 11. But, my Beloved, there
are ſome more choice and eminent
Strains and Actings of Grace, that
are above the ordinary rate, and do
peculiarly delight the Heart of God,
and bring Honour to him; and the more
you come up to theſe, and live under
the Power of theſe, the more ready

poſture

posture you are in for a dying hour. Grace is the beginning of Glory: 'Tis (as a worthy Divine expresses it) *The Infancy of Heaven and Glory*; and the higher it rises in us, the nearer it comes to Glory, and the more it fits us for it. Therefore I say, rest not in low and ordinary, but covet and press after the highest and noblest strains of Grace, some of which I shall here set down, and insist a little upon, in order to this great end of being found under the exactest readiness for a dying hour. The noble strains of Grace I would have you come up unto, are these:

1. For a Man to be high, and yet low; high in Worth and Attainments, but low in Spirit; low in his own Thoughts and Apprehensions of himself, to be humble under high and great Acquirements, this is noble Grace. 'Tis said of *Athanasius*, ὑψηλὸς τοῖς ἔργοις; ταπεινὸς ὃ τῷ φρονήματι--- That he *was high in Worth, but low in Spirit*: he had great Attainments, but was very humble and lowly under all; which is mentioned as a peculiar Excellency in him. And I remember a saying which I have read in one of the Ancients, speaking of Humility;

for a Man to be humble (says he) *in low, despicable, abject condition*; *this is a great matter, but honourable Humility*; that is to say, for a Man to be humble in an high and prosperous Condition, to be humble under eminent Employment. *This is a great thing, a rare Vertue indeed.* O for a Man to be high in Attainments, high in Gifts, high in Graces, high in Comforts, high in Services, high in Successes, high in Place and Esteem among Men; and yet at the same time to be low in Mind, low in Heart, low in his Esteem and Apprehension of himself; this is an high and eminent strain of Grace; this *Paul* excelled in, and 'twas his Crown and Glory; he was a Man of as high Attainments and Accomplishments, as most that ever lived; he was high in Gifts, high in Graces, high in Comforts, high in Services, high in Successes, high in all true Worth and Excellency; and yet how low, how humble in Spirit was he? How little in his own Eyes, and how vile in his own Esteem? You know how he speaks of himself, *The chief of Sinners*, 1 Tim. 1. 15. *less than the least of all Saints*, Ephes. 3. 8. *I am the least of the Apostles: not worthy*

to

to be called an Apostle, 1 Cor. 15. 9. *I am nothing*, 2 Cor. 12. 11. This also was a part of Christ's Crown and Glory: Who ever so eminent in Gifts and Graces? who ever abounded with such Glorious Endowments as he? and yet who so meek, so humble, so lowly, as he? *Learn of me* (says he) *for I am meek and lowly in Heart*, Matth. 11. 29. In a Verse or two before, he had told us that *all things were delivered unto him by the Father*, and yet here, *I am meek and lowly in Heart*: He was humble under all his Advancements and Attainments: Oh labour to be like him herein; what ever your Attainments are, labour to be humble under them, and that because he was so. *Blush, O Dust and Ashes: blush to think of being proud, be ashamed to be proud: God humbles himself, and dost thou exalt thy self?* So one speaks. And again elsewhere, *'Tis intolerable Impudence* (says he) *that when Majesty empties and humbles it self, a vile Worm should swell, and be blown up with Pride.* O be Humble, whatever your Attainments are: the more Humble you are, the more precious you are in God's sight; for *he hath respect unto the lowly, but beholdeth*

holdeth the proud afar off, Pſalm 138. 6. Yea, *He reſiſteth the Proud*, He ſets himſelf in Battel array againſt the Proud James 4. 6. *Arrogate nothing to thy ſelf of theſe things that are in thee, but thy Sins; by ſo much the more pretious thou art in God's Eyes, by how much the more vile and deſpiſable thou art in thy own Eyes*, ſays *Bernard*, And to ſay no more, none more ready to die than the humble and lowly Perſon; none more unready than the proud and high minded.

2. For a Man to be full, and yet empty; full of the Enjoyments, and yet empty of the Love of the World; for a Man to enjoy an affluence of this World's Good, a fulneſs of all Creature-comforts and Contentments, and yet to be dead to all, and ſit looſe from all, placing his whole Happineſs in God and Chriſt, this is a choice, a noble, and excellent ſtrain of Grace indeed. We reade of ſome, and but of ſome, in Scripture, who under an affluence of outward Enjoyments, have been weaned from all, and ſate looſe from all, and have kept up their Communion with God, placing the whole Reſt and Happineſs of their Souls therein; ſome ſuch (I ſay) we read of in Scrip-

Scripture, but truly they are but very few, and indeed 'tis both a rare and a difficult thing for a Soul thus to do: These things especially, when enjoyned in the fulness of them, are so apt to ingross the Heart to themselves, and to alienate it from God, and Communion with God, that 'tis indeed a very rare and difficult thing for a Man under an affluence of them, to sit loose from them, and make God, and Communion with God, all in all to Him. 'Tis a great Saying which I have read of a Learned Man, *Although Adversity breaks many, yet Prosperity and Fulness of Enjoyments kills many more: And how rare a Man is that, who in Prosperity does not, at least a little in some degree or other, let down his Watch, and remit his strictness and exactness in walking:* David *was a wise Man, and* Solomon *was a wiser; and yet both the one and the other discovered great Sin and Folly through abounding Prosperity.* So that I say, 'tis both a rare and difficult thing; but by how much the more rare and difficult it is, by so much the more excellent and eminent, when attain'd. Oh for a Man to swim Chin-deep in the Streams of Crea-

Creature-comforts, and yet not so forsake the Fountain of Living-waters: for a Man to have the streams run pleasantly on each hand of him, and yet to bathe and delight only in the Fountain, as his Rest and Happiness; for a Man in the height of Prosperity to be able to say to God, as the *Psalmist* in his Affliction did, *Psal.* 73. 25. *Whom have I in Heaven but thee? and there is none upon Earth I desire beside thee*: This is noble Grace indeed. Oh labour to come up to this, whatever your Worldly Injoyments are, though never so great, so high, so pleasant; yet as ever you would be ready for a dying hour, sit loose from all, die to all; the more dead we are to the World, the more ready we are to to go out of the World. A Worldly Spirit, a Spirit in love with this World, is most unready for a dying hour. How can he be ready to leave the World, that is in love with the World? A Worldly Spirit is most odious to the Spirit of God, and most unsuitable to the future Life; and one living in that Spirit, cannot be fit to die. 'Tis a great saying I have read in one, *He is perfect, whose Soul is alienated from the World; but* (says he) *thou*

Soul

Soul is far from God, to whom this miserable Life is sweet; that is to say, who is fond of these poor things here. Oh die daily to the World under all your Enjoyments of it, if you would indeed be ready to die.

3. For a Man to be empty, and yet full; to be destitute of all outward Comforts and Enjoyments, and yet to want nothing, but to be content, and to see all in God, and enjoy all in God; for a Man to be afflicted, and distress'd, and yet at the same time see a Fulness and Sufficiency of all Good and Happiness in a naked God, and naked Godliness, and accordingly to live up unto him, and rest satisfied in Him; this is a noble strain of Grace indeed: This the Prophet, and in him the Church resolved upon, *Hab.* 3. 17, 18. *Although the Fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall Fruit be in the Vine; the labour of the Olive shall fail, and the Fields shall yield no meat; the Flock shall be cut off from the Fold, and there shall be no Herd in the Stalls.* Here you see in a most sad supposition, a most forlorn and destitute condition supposed to come? Well, and what then? In case all this comes to pass, what will the Church do?

then

then? That the 18th Verse tells us, *Yet I will rejoyce in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my Salvation*; she is resolved to live upon God, and delight her self with God; she sees enough in him alone, and sets him and her interest in him, over against all Wants, Losses, and Afflictions. So the Apostles, 2 *Cor.* 6. 10. who were *as having nothing, yet possessing all things*: they saw all in Christ, and enjoyed all in Christ. *Here* (as one glosses upon the place) *we possess nothing, but do wander up and down from place to place; yet possessing Christ, in him we possess all things.* Oh for a Man to see and enjoy all in Christ, when the World frowns upon him, and is low with him, this is a noble strain of Grace; and let me say this, that 'tis an Argument that we have Carnal Hearts, if we see not all in God, and enough in God to satisfie us, and make us happy, whether we have any thing or nothing of this World. Heaven, which Death sends us to, if we are indeed ready for it, is nothing else but the vision and fruition of God, for there he is all in all: and certainly, if we do not see all in God now, and enough in God now, we cannot

suppose

ſuppoſe our ſelves to be ſo fully ready for Death and Eternity, as we ought to be.

4. For a Man to have no Affliction, and yet to be deeply afflicted: to be wholly free from all perſonal Affliction, and yet greatly to lay to Heart, and be afflicted for the Afflictions of God's Name and People, this is glorious Grace, Grace in luſtre. 'Tis the Obſervation of a worthy Divine, that in the day of the Church's Trouble and Affliction, when both his Name and People do greatly ſuffer, God does ſometims leave ſome of his People an affluence of all outward good things; when others are ſtripp'd of all their Comforts, they are full; when others are in ſtraits, they abound; neither is there any Cloud upon their Tabernacle. And this God does to try them, whether they will take up in their Enjoyments, and forget the Afflictions of his Name and People. And truly not to do ſo, but in ſuch a Caſe to lay the Church's Afflictions to Heart, and to bleed and mourn with the bleeding intereſt of God's Name and People, this is pure Grace, and marvellous pleaſing to God. Such Grace ſome of the Saints have

have come up unto. Such Graces was found in *David*, 2 Sam. 7. 2. *And it came to pass when the King sat in his House, and the Lord had given him rest round about, from all Enemies, that the King said unto* Nathan *the Prophet, See now I dwell in an House of Cedar, but the Ark of God dwelleth within Curtains.* Mark, all was well with *David*, he had Rest, and he dwelt in a House of Cedar, he had all things suitable for and becoming a King: Ah, but all was not well with the Interest of God and his Worship: *David*'s House and Interest prospered; But it fared not so well with the House and Interest of God, and therefore all his Enjoyments were as nothing to him, he so laid the Sufferings of God's Name and Worship to Heart. The like was found in *Nehemiah*, Chap. 2. all things were well with him in his own Person: He was the King's Cup-Bearer, and lived under the Enjoyment of an affluence of all outward Contentments; and yet was in deep Affliction of Spirit upon the account of the Churches Affliction: *When I heard these words* (says he) Chap. 1. 4. These words! what words? why, that the *Remnant that were*

left

left of the Captivity were in great Affliction and Reproach; that the Wall of Jerusalem *was broken down, and that the Gates thereof were burnt with Fire.* So *Verse* 3. *Now when I heard these words, I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted and prayed before the God of Heaven,* and in *Chap.* 2. beginning, *his Countenance,* 'tis said, *was sad* upon this account. O this was rare Grace, choice Grace! no personal Affliction, yet deeply afflicted in and with the Afflictions of the Church; so deeply afflicted, that all his personal Comforts, though great, were nothing to him. The like you find in *Daniel,* Dan. 10. 2, 3. Oh labour to come up to this strain of Grace: it may be things are well with you, and you have all that Heart can wish; but if they are not so with the Interests of God's Name and People, you should be deeply afflicted for this, in the midst of all your personal Comforts; and the more of this Spirit is in you, the more excellent your Grace is.

5. For a Man to submit chearfully to, and acquisce in the Will of God, when most sharp and severe upon his outward Interest, this is a noble strain of Grace,

When

When God ſhall exerciſe a Man wit
rending, tearing Diſpenſations, addi
Sorrow to Sorrow to him, breaking hi
with Breach upon Breach, cauſing all h
Waves and his Billows to go over him
and yet then for him quietly to acquieſc
in, and chearfully to ſubmit to wha
God does, this is choice Grace: ſuc
Grace was found in *Aaron*, Lev. 10.
God ſlew two of his Sons at once, an
the Diſpenſation was attended with
many aggravating Circumſtances,
made it almoſt unparallell'd, not to
equall'd, ſo terrible was it, and yet u
der that great ſtroke, *Aaron held his Pea*
he ſubmitted freely, and acquieſced chea
fully. The like was found in *Job*, wh
God had broken him all to pieces,
worſhips Him, and bleſſes his Nam
Job 1. 21, 22. And this was eminent i
Chriſt himſelf, and was indeed his Crow
and Glory; *Father, not my Will, but th*
Will be done, Mat. 26. 39. he freely ſub-
mits his Will to the Father's, though h
ſaw the Father coming forth againſt hi
in a moſt terrible Diſpenſation. Oh fo
a poor Soul to lie down at the foot o
God, and to be ſo melted into his Will,
as chearfully to bow to it, and acquieſc

in it under the ſharpeſt Diſpenſations: this is noble Grace indeed. Oh preſs after this, this is very neceſſary to prepare us for a dying hour; and the more of this, the more ready for that hour.

6. For a Man to maintain the Actings of his Faith in God, and to think honourably of him, when yet he frowns, and all things ſeem to make againſt the Soul: this is a noble ſtrain of Grace. Such Grace was found in *Abraham*, who 'tis ſaid, *againſt hope, believed in hope*, and ſo *was ſtrong in Faith*, Rom. 4. 18, 19, 20. when he had no encouragement; yea, when all things oppoſed him, yet then he maintained his Faith in God. So *Job*, Chap. 13. 15. *Though he ſlay me, yet will I truſt in him.* Oh to love a ſmiting God, and to truſt in a ſlaying God; this is noble Grace; for a Man to maintain the actings of his Faith in God, when he comes forth as an Enemy againſt him: This God calls for: He expects that *when we walk in Darkneſs, and ſee no Light, then we ſhould truſt in the Name of the Lord*; and ſo to do is noble Grace, *Iſa.* 50. 10, 11. Truly 'tis oftentimes the caſe of God's People, that they walk in Dark-

Darkneſs, and ſee no Light, all things ſeem to be againſt them. Poſſibly God frowns and afflicts; he frowns within, and he afflicts without: Yea, the poor 'Soul ſees nothing but difficulties and 'diſcouragements, look which way he 'will: He looks into his own Heart, 'and there he cannot find any one Grace 'or gracious Diſpoſiion; he looks into 'the Word, and there perhaps he can't 'ſee any one Promiſe that he dares lay 'hold upon; he looks back for former 'Experiences, and they are all out of 'ſight; he runs to his Evidences, and 'they are all blotted that he can't read 'them. Thus he is beſet with Difficulties, and all things ſeem to make againſt him both within and without; and yet now, when thus in the Dark, for the Soul to believe in God, and think well and honourably of him, this is noble Grace indeed, this is Faith in luſtre: to call Chriſt Lord, when he calls us Dog, and to faſten by Faith upon him, when he is beating us off, as to ſenſe at leaſt, as 'twas with the Woman, *Mat.* 15. 26, 27, 28. this is glorious Grace: for a Man to think well, and hope well, and believe well, in the face of Frowns and

Diſcou-

Diſcouragements: for a Man when God is frowning, and ſmiting, cordially to ſay, This is but for a time, he will ſmile again; He is but behind the Curtain, and will appear again; His deſire is not to ruine me, but refine me; He is but making me to prize his Grace and Preſence more; there is Love in all this: Oh for a Man to believe that there is Love in God's Heart, when he ſees nothing but Frowns in his Face, and meets with nothing hardly but Blows from his Hand; for a Man to believe that God intends nothing but Good, when he inflicts variety of Evils, ſurely this is glorious Grace. Oh that you would labour for ſuch Grace! ſuch Grace will look Death in the Face with boldneſs. 'Tis a great Speech which holy *Rutherford* hath, *I lay Inhibitions on my Thoughts*, (ſays he) *that they receive no Slander of my only only Beloved: Let him even ſay out his own Mouth, there is no hope; yet I will die in that ſweet beguile, it is not ſo: but I ſhall ſee the Salvation of God, it is my joy to belive under the Water, and to die with Faith in my Hand griping of Chriſt.* Beg ſuch Grace of God.

7. For a Man to ſee a beauty and excellency

cellency in Service as well as in Enjoyment, in Work as well as in Reward, and accodingly to have his Heart lie in it: this alſo is noble Grace. Sirs, there is a Beauty and Excellency in Service; for a Man to be uſed and employ'd for God, and to act for him in the World, is the higheſt Honour and Excellency (next to Union and Communion with him) that can be put upon a poor Creature: 'twas the honour of Chriſt, it is the honour of Angels; Service is better than Enjoyment; *'Tis a more bleſſed thing to give than to receive*, Acts 20. 35. Now when a Soul has anſwerable Thoughts and Apprehenſions about it, does practically and indeed ſee a beauty and excellency in Service for God, and accordingly is active for him, willing to be employed by him, and that though he has no reward at preſent from him; this is noble Grace. This was found in *Paul*, *Unto me* (ſaith he) *is this Grace given, to preach unto the Gentiles the unſearchable Riches of Chriſt*, Epheſ. 3. 8. He look'd on't as an honour, a favour to be employ'd in the Work and Service of Chriſt. And again, 1 *Tim.* 1. 12. *I thank Chriſt Jeſus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he*

accounted

accounted me faithful, putting me into the Miniſtry. Here he bleſſes Chriſt his Lord and Maſter, for uſing of him in his Work; Yea, ſuch a worth, beauty and excellency did he ſee in his Service, that he was content to ſtay out of Heaven, and the boſome of Chriſt's Love, where yet he earneſtly longed to be, that he might do further Service for Chriſt in this World. So you find, *Phil.* 1. 21, 22, 23. Oh for a Soul to long, and long earneſtly for Heaven, and the immediate enjoyment of Chriſt there, and yet to be content to ſtay here in a ſinful, ſinning, troubleſome World, meerly to do ſome further Service for Chriſt, and to honour him yet in the diſcharge of his Work and Warfare, this is high Grace: this Holy *Rutherford* had attained unto, he could under high aſſurances of Heaven, be content to ſtay many Years out of it, to preach *Chriſt.* The ſame mind dwelt in *Chriſt* himſelf, *Who went about doing good, making it his Meat and Drink to do his Father's Will, and to finiſh his Work.* Oh when a Soul comes to this, then he is fit to live, and fit to die; when with that Ancient Father, we come to ſay indeed, *What is it to live, and not to live*

for use and service? when we value l
and Days in this World, no further th
we are some way serviceable to Christ; t
is Growing Grace.

8. For a Man to rejoyce in the Gi
Graces, and uses of others, and th
though they out-shine and eclipse hi
for a Man to rejoyce to see Grace flo
rishing in others, and to see the Work
God carried on by others, though
himself be laid aside, and does not sh
in the honour of it, this is pure Grac
Grace in lustre. Such Grace was fou
in *Moses*: *Envieſt thou for my ſake?* (sa
he to *Joshua*, who would have had hi
to forbid *Eldad* and *Medad* to proph
sie in the Camp) *Would God that all t*
Lords People were Prophets, and that t
Lord would put his Spirit upon them
Numb. 11. 29. He was so far from env
ing at them; that he wishes there we
more of them. Such Grace was foun
also in *John* the *Baptist*, Joh. 3.26,27,--3
he rejoyced in Christ's being owned, an
honoured, and flock'd unto, and in th
increase of his Esteem with Men, thoug
to his own Abasement. In *verse* 26. som
of *John*'s Disciples come and tell him,
That *all Men come to Christ*; Well, say
h

he, 'tis but his due: *Verse* 27. *A Man can receive nothing, unless it be given him from Heaven: You your selves bear me witness that I said, I am not the Christ; and this my Joy is fulfilled, that he must increase, and I must decrease:* As if he had said, 'Tis so far from being a trouble to me, that 'tis indeed the compleating of my Joy. Such Grace was found in *Paul*, *Phil.* 1. 18. Who rejoyced that Christ was preach'd though with a design to cloud and eclipse him: *Christ is preach'd, and I therin do rejoyce; yea, and will rejoyce.* Some are apt to think 'twill be an Affliction to me (says he) that Christ is preached by any but my self; whereas indeed this is ground of great Joy to me; I rejoyce, that though I cannot be permitted to preach Christ my self, yet that so many others do preach him. And I remember a great Speech of *Luther* (arguing the same Grace to be in him) writing to *Melancthon*, to comfort him under the Lets and Oppositions the Work and Cause of God met withal in his time; the Cause of God was opposed and his Work obstructed, in the sense of which *Melancthon* was greatly troubled and de-

jected, and *Luther* understanding it writes an Epistle to him, to comfort and encourage him, in which he has this saying; *God* (says he) *is able to raise the Dead, and he is able to support his fallen Cause, and to raise it when fallen: If he shall not account us worthy to be used therein, let him do it by others, and make use of others.* Mark, He was content the Work of God should be done by others. There are two things which I look upon to carry as pure and noble Grace in them, as any whatsoever: one is, to be willing to be used in God's Work, without being taken notice of, or having the honour of it: the other is, for a Man to rejoyce to see the Work of God carried on by others, though he himself be laid aside, and has not the Honour of being used therein. Oh labour for such Grace, Grace that will rejoyce in the Gifts, Graces, Uses, and successes of others, though you thereby are out-shined.

9. For a Man to have great Affection to the Name and Honour of God and Christ, and to think nothing too much to do, too hard to suffer, or too dear to part withal for the Service and Advance-

ment

ment thereof, this is noble Grace: when a Man hath high and paramount Affections to the Name of God and Christ, loving and preferring of it infinitely before all his own Interests and Concerns, being ready to be, do, or suffer any thing for the Service of it. Oh what Grace is this! Such Grace some of the Saints have attained unto. *Lord* (says *Moses* concerning *Israel*) *if thou wilt forgive their Sin; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of the Book which thou hast written*, Exod. 32. 32. What is here meant by the Book which God has written, I shall not now stand to enquire or determine; but to be content to be blotted out of it, was to be sure, a great piece of Self-denial; and this *Moses* desired, you see, rather than that the People should be utterly destroyed; and all because he knew how much the Glory of God was concerned; and would suffer by their Destruction, as appears by comparing this *Verse* with *Verse* 12. The sum (as one observes) is, that *Moses prefers the Glory of God before his own Salvation, whose Glory was conjoyned with* Israel's *Preservation, in respect of the Promises made to the Fathers, and in respect*

of the Blaſphemies which the Egyptia
and other Adverſaries were ready to bel
out againſt God, ſhould he deſtroy the
Such Grace was found alſo in *Jo*
Baptiſt in the place lately mentione
John 3. latter end, who was conte
Coriſt ſhould raiſe himſelf out of his
baſement. Such Grace was found i
Chriſt, who preferred his Father's Glo
before his own Life, *Joh.* 12.27,28. Suc
Grace was found in *Paul*, who was wi
ling not only to be bound, but even to d
for the ſake of Chriſt, Acts 21.13. for t
Name, the Honour of Chriſt; Chriſt
Honour was ſo dear to him, that h
could be content to die to ſerve it, h
preferr'd it before his Life: Oh, my Be
loved, when a Soul ſhall be ſo ſwallowe
up with Love and Zeal to the Glory o
God, and the Intereſt of Chriſt in th
World; as that his own intereſts are i
a manner overlook'd and forgotten by
him; when to ſee the Name of God ex
alted, ſhall be a Man's greateſt Triumph;
and to ſee it debaſed, ſhall be his greate
Trouble; when his practical Language
ſhall be ſuch as this, Father, here I am;
which way ſoever thy Glory lies, I am
ready to ſerve thee in it; 'tis Honour

enough

enough for me to honour God, 'tis Happineſs enough for me to glorify God; and therefore let God do with me, and let him call me to do what ever he will in order thereunto: Let him, if he pleaſes, eclipſe my Name, and throw my Glory in the Duſt, ſo be it he will thereby raiſe his own Name, and brighten his own Glory; Let him, if he pleaſes, make me a Footſtool, and let me be trampled upon, ſo be it he will advance himſelf into the Throne thereby; Let me die, if his Will be ſo, that his Glory may live; whatever becomes of me, though I ſhould be ſtript of all, though my Name and Intereſt ſhould not, yet let God be magnified; let God have Honour in the World, and let the Intereſt and Kingdom of Chriſt proſper, 'tis enough, I am ſatisfied. When I ſay, 'tis thus with a Soul, this ſpeaks noble Grace indeed. Oh preſs after ſuch Grace; the more you love the Name of God and Chriſt the fitter you are either to live or die.

10. For a Man not only to be willing to ſuffer, but alſo to rejoyce in Sufferings for the ſake of Chriſt and the Goſpel, for a Man chearfully to take up the

Croſs for Chriſt, and to look upon it a
his Crown and Glory, as an Honour an
Preferment to him; this is alſo an hig
ſtrain of Grace, and is greatly pleaſin
to God. The Croſs, my Beloved, in i
ſelf *is a black ſower Crab-Tree*, (as on
calls it;) but though ſuch in it ſelf
yet as 'tis born for the ſake of Chriſt, and
ſo his Croſs, 'tis an Honour, and not a
Reproach, a Crown of Glory, a Royal
Diadem upon the Head of a poor Crea-
ture: *To you is given on the behalf of
Chriſt, to ſuffer for his ſake*, Phil. 1. 29.
Sufferings for Chriſt are Noble, Royal,
Honourable Gifts, more honourable than
the Crowns and Kingdoms of this
World: a Priſon for Chriſt, is more
honourable than the ſtatelieſt Palaces of
the greateſt Princes; Bonds for Chriſt
are more honourable than ropes of Pearl
or Diamonds. Now when a Soul ſhall
look on theſe things as ſuch, and accord-
ingly rejoyce in them, this is Noble
Grace indeed; ſuch Grace was found in
the Diſciples, *Acts* 5. 41. *Who rejoyced*
(or as the word is, *leapt for Joy*) *that
they were counted worthy to ſuffer ſhame
for the Name of Chriſt*; or, as the words
may be rendred, that they were ho-
noured

noured to be dishonoured for Christ. So the Apostle and his Brethren, *Rom.* 5. 3. *We glory in Tribulation*; and, *I rejoyce*, (says *Paul*) *in Reproaches, Necessities and Persecutions for Christ*, 2 Cor. 12. 10. So those Worthies, *Heb.* 10. 34. who *took joyfully the spoyling of their Goods*. This Christ calls for, *Mat.* 5. 22. *Rejoyce and be exceeding glad when Men persecute you for my sake.* And again, *Count it all joy when you fall into divers Afflictions*, &c. *James* 1. 12. 'Tis admirable to think how some of the Saints, both in former and latter times, have gloried in the Cross of Christ, and even longed for it. *Luther* longed for the honour of Martyrdom, and was ready even to envy those that were called unto it, when he was not; for writing to some of his acquaintance in bonds for Christ and the Gospel, he breaks out into this Complaint; *O miserable me, who have been first in teaching these things; but last, and perhaps never worthy to be a partaker of your Bonds and Fires.* O labour for such *Grace*; we think it much if we be content to suffer; but we should rejoyce in Sufferings, glory in the *Cross*, carry our selves under Sufferings for *Christ*, as

looking upon them to be (for so indeed they are) an Honour and Priviledg unto us.

11. For a Man in a prosperous condition, all things going smoothly with him in the World, to be willing to loose Anchor, and be gone hence to Heaven; yea, for a Man to long, and long earnestly for a Dissolution, that he might be with Christ fully, and for ever with him, this is noble Grace. Sirs, take a Man whose Mountain of Prosperity stands strong, whose Paths are as it were strewed with Roses, the Roses of Creature-Contentments; who has all that Heart can wish of this World's Good, the streams running pleasantly on each hand of him; for such a one in such a condition to long, and long earnestly to be gone to his dear Lord, that so he may be fully like him, and may see him as he is; that he may be eternally in his presence, swallowed up in the Love, Praises, and Admirations of him, be a perfect partaker of his Life and Image, this is great and glorious Grace. When though a Man's Condition in the World be every way such, as that he may well say, *'Tis good to be here*: yet the daily pulse of his

Soul

Soul is that of the Spouſe, *Cant.* 8.14. *Make haſte, my Beloved, and be thou like a Roe, or young Hart upon the Mountains of Spices*; make haſte to fetch me hence to Heaven. This is noble Grace, and that which every one does not come up unto. Indeed when we are in Affliction, and our Lives are bitter to us, by reaſon of many and great Trials, Difficulties, and Temptations, then many are willing to be gone. But this is ſo far from noble Grace, that this may be where there is no Grace at all. But when the Sun ſhines upon our Tabernacle, and ſets not; when we live in a Paradiſe of Earthy Comforts and Contentments; then to pant and long to be gone to be with Chriſt; then to ſuſpire and breath after the other World, and with an holy Impatiency to look out for it, this is glorious Grace, Grace that carries an Heavenly Odour and Savour with it. Thus I have mentioned ſome of thoſe more noble and excellent ſtrains of Grace for our Imitation, which I would have you labour to come up unto; and the more you come up to theſe, the more fit you are to live, and the more ready to die.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

Wherein further Directions are laid down in order to the setting things right, and making all ready for a dying hour.

Seventhly. WOuld you indeed have all things right and in order, before a dying hour comes? Then be diligent and faithful in the Work of God, that Work which God in a particular manner hath given you to do: we have all our Work to do, and that given us from God; we have general Work, and special Work.

First, We have general Work to do; the Work of our Christian Calling, the Work of our Salvation, which we are commanded *to work out with fear and trembling*, Phil. 2. 12. the work of Faith, and the labour of Love; the work of Mortification, Self-denial, and the like. We have also,

Secondly, Special Work to do, the Work of our particular Stations and Places; Work that is incumbent upon us, as we stand thus and thus related, being Magistrates, or Ministers; the

Masters

Maſters of Families, or the like: For all ſuch Relations bring their Work and Duty with them; and this indeed is properly our own Work, and this we ſhould be diligent and faithful in, as ever we would be found ready for a dying hour. *Paul* had this Work to do, and he was diligent and faithful in the diſcharge of it; which gave him comfort when he came to die, 2 Tim. 4. 6, 7, 8. *I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand; I have fought a good Fight, I have finiſhed my Courſe; henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteouſneſs*, &c. He had been faithful in the diſcharge of his Work while he lived; And being now to die, he found the comfort and ſweetneſs of it: yea, this was that which our Lord himſelf comforted himſelf withal, when he was to die, and in the ſenſe of it goes to his Father with boldneſs for his Glory, Joh. 17. 14. *I have glorified thee on Earth, I have finiſhed the Work which thou gaveſt me to do.* Indeed he had a great deal of Work given him by the Father, and he was faithful and punctual in the diſcharge of it all, which was a comfort to him now he was to die: And he him-

himself tells us, *that is the blessed Servant, whom when his Lord shall come, shall find so doing*; that is, faithful and diligent in the discharge of his proper Work. *Mat.* 24. 46. Truly this is the posture which some (though but a few) are found in; they make Conscience to discharge the Duty that is incumbent upon them; they say with their Lord, *I must work the Works of him that sent me, while it is day, for the night cometh, when no Man can work*, John 9. 4. They see a Night coming, Death coming, Judgment coming, Eternity coming; and accordingly they desire to lay out their whole Souls in the Work of God, to live up to the Laws of Christ in every Relation; and they look upon that day as lost, wherein they have not done somewhat for God and their own Souls: and how comfortably may such look Death in the face when it comes! I have read the Life of an holy Minister, who was seised upon by Sickness, which was unto Death, while he was preaching the everlasting Gospel, and lying a few days sick ere he died, a Fellow-Labourer of his, another holy Minister, coming to visit him, and seeing Death in his face,

cryed

cryed out in ſome Paſſion, *O dear Sir, are you going to Heaven from us?* To whom he replied, *Yes, I bleſs God, that my Maſter found me in his Work.* Truly, might a Man have his choice and option, he would have Death to find him while he is engaged in the Work of God. Oh ſtudy your own Work: ſtudy the Work and Duty of your Chriſtian Calling: ſtudy that Work and Duty which is incumbent upon you in your particular Relations, and beg of God a Heart to be diligent in the diſcharge of one and the other.

Eightly; Would you indeed have all right, and in order in the matters of your Souls, e're a dying hour comes? then be ſure to ſuffer no diſtance, or eſtrangement to grow up between God and you; but labour to keep up a conſtant and intimate Acquaintance with him, *Acquint thy ſelf with God, and be at Peace*, Job 22. 21. The more of an holy Intimacy and Acquaintance with God we maintain, the more we are at Peace with our ſelves: and I am ſure the more we are at Peace in our ſelves, the more ready we are for a dying hour. Woe and alas for us! How oft do we let

fall

fall our Converſe and Communion with God, and ſuffer ſad diſtances and eſtrangements to grow up between him and us; and indeed (my Beloved) it is a ſad and amazing thing to think how ſuddenly and imperceptibly diſtances and eſtrangements will grow up between God and a Man's Soul: For my own part, ſhould I have heard of it only by the hearing of the Ear, and had not found it by too many ſad and woful Experiences, I could not have believed how ſuddenly and imperceptibly diſtances and eſtrangements will grow up between God and a Man's Soul, yea and that after the neareſt, livelieſt, and moſt intimate Acquaintance and Communion with him; which calls upon us to be very watchful and circumſpect, as to this thing; and (my Beloved) as you will die with boldneſs and comfort, let me adviſe and perſwade you to give all diligence to keep up conſtant intercouſe and acquaintance with God, and watch narrowly againſt all diſtance between him and you. Which of us that knows any thing of the things of God, knows not, that we ſuffer diſtances and eſtrangements to grow up between

God

God and us? We cannot tell how with any tolerable boldneſs and comfort, to look him in the face in a Duty, or ſcarce to think of him with delight, much leſs ſhall we be able to look him in the face with comfort in Death, in caſe we ſuffer diſtances to grow up between him and us: Moreover, take this for a ſure rule, That the more you are verſed in Communion with God, and do maintain an holy Intimacy and Correſpondence with him, the more boldneſs and comfort you will have when you come to die: then yon will be able to ſay, I am now going to be, and live for ever immediately with that God with whom I have lived with much ſweet and intimate Communion here; I am now going to converſe more fully with him in Heaven, with whom I have enjoyed much ſweet Converſe here on Earth. Should Death find a Man under diſtances and eſtrangements between God and him, it muſt neceſſarily be uncomfortable unto him; but when there is an holy Intimacy kept up between God and the Soul: then the Soul need not fear, or be aſhamed to look Death and Judgment both in the face: *Little Chil-*

dren

dren, saith *John*, *abide in him, that when he shall appear, we may have boldneſs, and not be aſhamed before him at his coming*, 1 *John* 2. 28. We are put into Chriſt by Faith at our firſt Converſion; and we abide in him by after-acts of Faith and Communion: and this abiding in him is the way to have boldneſs before him at his coming: therefore mind this, and pray much about this; take heed of diſtances growing up between God and you, and labour to have theſe ſweet Viſits, thoſe ſweet intercourſes of Love, thoſe bleſſed acts of Communion kept up between God and you, that are wont to be kept up between him and his watchful, cloſe-walking Saints. And in order hereunto, take three or four ſhort hints.

First, Look upon and eſteem Converſe and Communion with God, to be (as indeed it is) your higheſt Happineſs, both here, and in Heaven; the higheſt Happineſs Souls are capable of here, is to live in Converſe and Communion with God in ſuch ways as are ſutable to this preſent ſtate; and the higheſt Happineſs Souls are capable of eternally in Heaven, is to live in the Divine Preſence, and to ſee God's Face continually, and to

lodge

lodg for ever in the bosom of his Love. We may run out to a thousand things, and when we have done all, this will be the highest and indeed the only Happiness of Souls (*viz.*) to converse with God, and to enjoy Communion with God, and they that miss of this, will miss of all Happinss for ever: accordingly we should prize it, and press after it, we should account all things as nothing on this side God, and Communion with God in Christ. The Saints of old have done so; *Many*, saith *David*, *will say, Who will shew us any good? but, Lord lift thou up the Light of thy Countenance upon us*, Psal. 4. 6. As if he should say, While others are seeking their Happiness from Carnal and Earthly Enjoyments, Corn, Wine, and Oil, the Happiness we desire is thy Love, thy Favour, the beamings out of the Light of thy Countenance upon our Souls. So *Psal.* 39. 7. *Now, Lord, what wait I for? my Hope is in thee*; I have done with the streams; as if he should say, and I desire to cleave wholly to the Fountain: I have done with the Creatures, of which I have formerly been too fond, and I would now take up

my

my whole rest, solace, and satisfaction in thy self alone: and also, *Psal.* 73. 25, 26. *Whom have I in Heaven but thee? and there is none on Earth I desire in comparison of thee: My Heart and my Flesh faileth; but God is the strength of my Heart, and my Portion for ever.* The same Spirit dwelt and acted in *Austin. All fulness and plenty* (says he) *which is not my God, is Want and Poverty:* And again elsewhere, *Thou, Lord, art my God, my Happiness; and unto thee, and after thee, do I breath and suspire Day and Night.* O (my Beloved) did we indeed prize Communion with God more, we should live more in Communion with him: and this take for a certain truth, That it will never be well with us indeed, till we see all in God, and account we enjoy all Happiness, in injoying Communion with him.

Secondly, In the close of every Day, take a serious view of, and diligently consider what hath passed between God and you, what Transactions there have been between God and your Souls that Day: there doth not a Day pass, wherein there do not many things pass between God and his People; and he that would

would prevent distances and estrangements between God and him, should seriously ponder and lay to Heart what hath passed between God and his Soul, what Transactions there have been between God and him that day. On the one hand, ponder and consider what hath passed from God to you, and what his carriage towards you hath been, what approaches he hath made to you, what intimates of Love, what overtures of Communion, what discoveries of himself and his Glory; how far and in what way God hath been dealing with your Spirits, convincing, enlightning, quickning, or comforting of them: What calls he hath given you, what Myrrhe he hath dropped upon the handle of the lock, what tastes you have had of his Sweetness and Grace, what holy impressions he hath made upon you, and the like. On the other hand, ponder and consider what hath passed from you to God, and what your carriages towards him have been, what acceptation and entertainment you have given him, making his approaches to you, what value you have put upon his Presence, and the intimations of his

Love;

Love: how far you have embraced and improved the Overtures he made you of farther Communion with him; what Awe there hath been upon you of his Holiness, and his All-seeing Eye; what out-goings of Heart there have been found within you after him; what breathings of Love, what holy longings and desires, what springings and workings of Spiritual Joy, and Delight of Soul to him, and in him; what place he hath had in your Thoughts and Contemplations; how far you have lived to him, and upon him; wherein you may have either grieved or delighted his Spirit, and the like. Thus in the close of every day, ponder and consider what hath passed between God and you, and accordingly deport and demean your selves before him. Wherein you have failed, or been defective in any thing in order to keeping up Communion between God and you, be humbled, and set all right by Faith and Prayer; adore God in his Acts of Grace and Condescension (as to be sure you will find cause so to do) and loath your selves, for any acts of Sin or Unkindness, Undutifulness, or disrespect that you have been guilty

of

of towards God: O this would be a bleſſed courſe indeed, to prevent diſtances and eſtrangements between God and you. This *David* calls *a communing with his own Heart:* and enjoyns it as a Duty of the higheſt importance; *Stand in awe and ſin not: commune with your Hearts and be ſtill*, Pſal. 4. 4. It is what he lived in the practice of, *Pſalm* 77. 6. (if he were the Author of that Pſalm) *I communed with mine own Heart, and my Spirit made diligent ſearch.* O be punctual in this Work.

Thirdly, Be much converſant, and that with all Spiritual Diligence, in the Ways and Duties of Communion: thoſe Ways and Duties wherein God is wont to meet his People, and maintain Converſe and Communion with them; and in all of them wait for God and his approaches to you: there are thoſe which we may call Ways and Duties of Communion; Ways and Duties wherein God and his People do hold converſe with each other, wherein God viſits and communicates himſelf unto his People, and wherein his People may be ſaid to viſit God; and make out after God, and theſe are the uſe of the Word and Sacraments,

the

the exercise of Prayer, Meditation, Self-examination, and the like: now as ever you would prevent the growing up of distances and estrangements between God and you, see that you are much conversant in these, and that with a holy and spiritual Diligence, waiting for God, and the Manifestations of God to your Souls in them; these are the Galleries wherein Christ and his People do take sweet turns together: the green Beds wherein they lie down in the bosom of each others Love: Therefore keep up a constant and diligent attendance on God in these. And in all your attendances on him, look after converse with him, let it be your solemn aim to converse with him, and see his Face, to have a visit, a smile, a descent of Love from him. I do suppose you to be such as do and will attend on Publick Ordinances, and wait for God there, as they waited for the Spirit at *Jerusalem:* That only then which I would press you to, in this present case, shall be, to be much conversant in Prayer and Meditation between God and your own Souls; in these two great Duties of Communion with God, secret Prayer and Meditation

on

on: Oh the loſs as to Communion with God, that we expoſe our ſelves unto, by being no more in Prayer, and holy Meditation! The holy Ones of old, and thoſe that have been Men of the higheſt Communion with God, have alſo been Men of much Prayer, and great Meditation; as I might inſtance in *David*, and *Daniel*, and others: And indeed their Communion with God, came in and was kept up this way. God (you know) hath told us, *The Prayer of the Upright is his delight*, Prov. 15. 8. and Chriſt beſpeaks the Prayer of his Spouſe as moſt pleaſing and delightful to him, Cant. 2. 14. *O my Dove! thou art in the clefts of the Rock, in the ſecret places of the Stairs; Let me ſee thy Countenance, and hear thy Voice, for ſweet is thy Voice, and thy Countenance is comely*; as if he ſhould ſay, approach to me in ſecret Prayer, I will aſſure thee it will be moſt ſweet and pleaſant to me. And as he thus delights in the Prayers of his People; ſo he will ſurely delight them in their Prayers with the viſits of his Love, and Communications of his Grace, the beamings out of his Glory to, and upon their Souls; he hath promiſed to *make them*

joyful in the house of Prayer; yea, he hath promised to perform the whole Grace of the new Covenant in answer to their Prayers, *Ezek.* 36. 37. Oh the great things God doth for his People, and the sweet Communion that is kept up between him and them, in a way of Prayer! I remember a saying of one, *He that is not much in Prayer, will never be a Man of much Excellency*: And I may as truly say, he that is not much in Prayer, is never like to be a Man of much Communion with God. And so for Meditation: Oh how sweet, how Heaven-like a Duty is that! Oh how much of God is let out many times to the Souls of his People herein! *David* experienced this, *Psal.* 63. 5, 6. *My Soul shall be satisfied as with Marrow and Fatness, and my Mouth shall praise thee with joyful Lips; when I remember thee upon my Bed, and meditate on thee in the night-watches.* While he was conversant in this Duty of Meditation, his Soul was filled with Joy and Satisfactions, as with Marrow and Fatness. Again, saith he, my *meditation of thee shall be sweet*, Psal. 104. 34. Oh be much and frequent with God in these ways and duties of Communion.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, Give Chriſt his due Place and Honour, in all your makings out after Communion with God. *Joſeph* told his Brethren, *they ſhould not ſee his face, unleſs they brought their Brother* Benjamin *with them:* and truly you are not like to ſee the face of God, in any of the fore-mentioned Ways and Duties, unleſs you bring Chriſt with you, and give him his due Place and Honour therein; that is to ſay, unleſs you eye him, and act Faith upon him, as the only way and medium of Communion with God: Chriſt beſpeaks this at our hands, while he tells us, *I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no Man cometh to the Father but by me*, John 14. 6. and by his Blood it is, that we have a way opened to us into the Holy of Holies, acceſs for our Perſons and Prayers into the Divine Preſence, *Heb.* 10. 19, 20. yea, not only as he purchaſed a Liberty, and opened a way for us to approach into the Preſence of God; but having done this, by his Mediation and Interceſſion it is that any of us come to God: Hence he is ſaid *to ſave to the very uttermoſt all that come to God by him, ſeeing he ever lives to make Interceſſion for*

us, *Heb.* 7. 25. Indeed, were it not for Chriſt, none of us could ever hope to ſee the Face of God, and live; none of us could ever hope to ſee one ſmile of God's Face, one embrace of his Boſom, any the leaſt deſcent and emanation of Love from him: Were it not for Chriſt, when we come unto God, we ſhould find him to be a conſuming Fire, and when he and our Souls did meet, it would be as the meeting of devouring Fire, and withered Stubble. In a word, all Communications of Grace and Love from God to us, are by and through Chriſt, and all the Love, the Duty, the Homage we render to God, muſt be all tendred to him by and through Chriſt, if ever we find acceptation with him; have Chriſt therefore in your Eye in all your Approaches unto God, as him, *by whom we have acceſs unto the Father*. Epheſ. 2. 18. Let the real Language of your Souls be, If I have any one ſmile from God, it muſt be upon the account of Chriſt; if he ſheweth himſelf pacified towards me, it muſt be through his Blood; if he gives out any Grace, any Favour, any Bleſſing to me, it will be upon the ſole account of his Mediation; if ever either my

per-

Perſons, or Services be accepted of the Lord, it muſt be in and through this Mediator. Moreover, how great ſoever the diſtance between God and my Soul is, yet Chriſt can bring me nigh unto him; and however unworthy of, or unſutable to Communion with God I am in my ſelf, yet ſuch is his well-pleaſedneſs in Chriſt, that well beloved Son of his, that I will hope through him to find Grace in his ſight, and to be lodged in the boſom of his Love. Thus put all the honour upon Chriſt, that is due to him in this buſineſs; this is what is pleaſing to the Father: and the more you thus honour him, the fuller and more conſtant will your Converſe and Communion with God be.

Ninthly, Would you indeed have all right, and in order for a dying hour? Would you be ready for that laſt and great Work? Then live wholly and conſtantly upon Chriſt, and his Righteouſneſs for your Juſtification and Acceptation with God, both living and dying. The more we live out of our ſelves upon Chriſt and his Righteouſneſs, for Juſtification and Acceptation with God, the more ready poſture we are in for a

ing hour: this indeed is the main thing; and when we have done all that ever we can, to deck and adorn our ſelves with Grace and glorious Diſpoſitions, ſtill we muſt live out of our ſelves, and out of all thoſe Ornaments, upon the naked Righteouſneſs of Chriſt, for Juſtification and Salvation. This is that which the Scripture calls the readineſs of the Lambs Wife, *Rev.* 19. 7, 8. *Let us be glad, and rejoyce, for the Marriage of the Lamb is come, and his Wife hath made her ſelf ready.* And wherein that Readineſs lay, the next words will tell you; *To her was granted to be cloathed with fine Linen, clean and white, which fine Linen is the Righteouſneſs of the Saints*; that is, the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt imputed to the Saints through believing: This is the *beſt Robe*, mentioned *Luke* 15. 22. a Robe indeed which covers all our Nakedneſs, that beautifies and adorns us, and renders us moſt amiable in God's Eye. Whatſoever ſpots and blemiſhes, whatever failings or defects may be upon us, yet theſe are not ſeen, while God looks upon us as cloathed with the Righteouſneſs of his Son; and we by Faith do live upon that Righteouſneſs

as

as the ſole matter of our Juſtification and Acceptance with him: and let me tell you, the more clear and diſtinct the actings of our Faith are, in carrying us out of our ſelves, and all ſelf-righteouſneſs, and relying wholly on Chriſt and his Righteouſneſs, the more ready and comfortable poſture we are in for a dying hour. This was the great thing *Paul* coveted, and preſſed after to the very laſt, and which he accounted all things but Dung for: *Phil.* 3. 8, 9. *I count all things but Dung, that I may win Chriſt, and be found in him, not having mine own Righteouſneſs which is by the Law, but the Righteouſneſs of Faith, the Righteouſneſs which is of God by Faith.* He dreaded the thoughts of being found in any thing of his own; he trembled to think of ſtanding upon his own bottom; the bottom of his own Worth and Righteouſneſs, when he ſhould come to die; and he cleaved intirely unto, and relied wholly upon Chriſt, and his moſt perfect Righteouſneſs. Oh let me tell you, *Paul* had as much, and perhaps more to have reſted upon, than ten thouſand of us; for Gifts, for Graces, for Privileges, for Services, for Succeſſes,

for Sufferings for Christ, he went beyond any meer Man that ever lived; and *Chrysostome* observes of him, That he feared nothing but Sin; to displease God, and to dishonour him, was the only thing that was terrible to him; and the Scripture gives a large and frequent account of his other Attainments: But still he goeth out of all, and his Language is, None but Christ! none but Christ! not but that he also presseth after the greatest eminency and exactness in Holiness, as you find in the following Verses of this third to the *Philippians*: And indeed, this is the true Spirit of the Gospel, to press after the greatest eminency and exactness in Holiness: to covet to attain, if possible, unto Angelical Holiness, and yet under, and after all, to live singly and iutirely on a naked Christ, and his Righteousness for Justification and Acceptation with God; and the more you come to, and live in this Spirit, the more ready you are for Death, and a blessed Eternity. This was a great part of the ground of the Churches rejoycing, Isa. 63. 10. *I will greatly rejoyce in the Lord, My Soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath cloathed*

me

me with the Garments of Salvation, and hath covered me with a Robe of Righteouſneſs; which *Chryſoſtom*, and others both Ancient and Modern, interpret of the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt: and indeed no greater ground of rejoycing to a Man or Woman, whether living or dying, than to be cloathed with the Robe of the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt: I ſhall only put you in mind of a ſaying I have heard from a holy Man, the day before he died: *My Friends* (ſaith he, ſpeaking to my ſelf and others) *I have walked with God theſe thirty Years, and have enjoyed a good meaſure of the aſſurance of his Love: but now that I am come to die, I do not place my Comfort on any of all theſe, but on the infinite Satisfaction of Jeſus Chriſt.* Oh there, there, when we have done all, we muſt lay the weight and ſtreſs of our Souls, Comfort, Salvation, and all: and therefore be ſure you live out of your ſelves upon Chriſt. It is a great ſaying *Luther* hath to this purpoſe, *Lord Jeſus* (ſaith he) *thou art my Righteouſneſs, and I am thy Sin: thou tookeſt mine*, (meaning his Sin) *and thou gaveſt me thine*, (meaning his Righteouſneſs) *thou tookeſt that which*

thou waſt not, and thou gaveſt me that which I was not; intending the exchange that Chriſt had made with him, giving him his Righteouſneſs for his Sin. Oh let this be the Language of our Souls to Chriſt; ſo ſhall we be found ready when a dying hour comes.

Tenthly; Would you indeed die with comfort? Then beg God to ſtand by you, and give you actual Grace in a dying hour; and make it one of your great works to treaſure up many Prayers for this before-hand: when you have done all, ſhould God withdraw his Preſence, and the influences of his Grace and Love from you when you come to die, Death would be in a great meaſure uncomfortable to you: but if God will be with you, if God will ſtand by you, if he will vouchſafe you the Influences and Communications of his Grace in a dying hour, then how will your Souls triumph over Death? this indeed will ſweeten Death: They are great words of *David* in *Pſal.* 23. 4. *Though I walk through the valley of the ſhadow of Death, I will fear no Evil*; *for thou art with me*: having the Preſence of God with him, he was not, he would not be afraid,

even

even in the very valley of the ſhadow of Death. Truly, without the Preſence of God, we cannot live comfortably, whatſoever our Attainments in Grace have been, yet if God withdraw his Preſence from us, we can do nothing, we can bear nothing, we cannot perform the leaſt Duty, we cannot reſiſt the leaſt Temptation, we cannot grapple with the leaſt Corruption, nor carry through, as we ought, the leaſt difficulty: much leſs ſhall we be able to die with Comfort if God withdraw; therefore, I ſay, beg God to ſtand by you in a dying hour: Let it be your daily Peayer to God.

Firſt, That he would be with you in the difficulties of Life.

Secondly, That he would not leave you in the Conflicts and Agonies of Death. And indeed we ſhould not paſs that day, wherein we do not treaſure up one Prayer for this before-hand; and thus doing, God will not leave us, God will not fail us in that laſt and great difficulty; at leaſt he will not leave us in point of Grace: our Lord himſelf was left in the Agonies of Death by the Father, in point of Comfort, which put him to that out-cry, *Why haſt thou forſaken*

ſaken me? but he was not left by him in point of Grace, ſtill a Spirit of Faith and Holineſs acted him; and therefore though forſaken, he cries out, *My God, my God.* If poſſibly, in conformity to our Head, we ſhould be left in that hour in point of Comfort, yet if we carry our ſelves as we ought, we ſhall not be left in point of Grace, and if we be not left in point Grace; all will do well though not ſo ſweet and joyous with us as otherwiſe it would be. And thus I have given you theſe more particular directions in order to a preparation for a dying hour; which if you live up to, you may not only live above the fear of Death, but alſo in the joyful expectation thereof daily.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

Being a consolatory Conclusion of the whole Discourse, containing Encouragements against the fear of Death, unto all such as are found in the practice of the foregoing Directions.

NOW for a Conclusion of the whole matter. Upon all that hath been declared, Soul, let me ask thee one Question: Doest thou indeed see thy particular concern in this business? so see it, as really to make it thy great work and solicitude while living, to set all things right, and make all things ready for a dying hour. Some there are that are so happy as so to do; and art thou one of them? then why shouldst thou fear Death? yea, why shouldst thou not exult, and thy Heart leap within thee in the sight and thoughts of its approach? True, it is a dark entry, but it leads to a fair and stately Palace, even the Father's House: 'tis a rough and difficult passage, but it sets thee safe on shore in a large and fat Land: true, it carries with it somewhat a black, lowring, and ghastly aspect to nature; and nature

ture may at first possibly be startled, and recoil at the sight of it; but open the Eye of thy Faith, and behold it in the glass of the Gospel, view it in the Death of thy Lord and Head, and it will not appear half so terrible; yea, thou wilt find it to be not so much an Enemy as a Friend; not as a King of Terrours, but rather as a King of Comforts; not as an object to be dreaded and trembled at, but rather to be rejoyced in, and triumphed over by thee: it will appear to be not loss, but gain: *For me to die is gain*, says *Paul*, *Phil.* 1. 21. yea it will be thy great gain, 'twill be the period of all thy Misery, and the perfecting of all thy Happiness; and the truth is, we are never perfectly happy, till Death comes. But for thy further encouragement, I shall in a few particulars shew you what Death, come when it will, doth and will do for such as make all ready for its coming.

1. Death, when ever it comes, will translate thee, thou ready Soul, from Earth to Heaven, from a strange Land to thine own Home, and Father's House; and will not this be a kindness? as for this World, what is it to the poor Saints,

but

but a ſtrange Land? 'tis Heaven is their Home and Country: hence they have confeſt, and do *confeſs themſelves to be Pilgrims and Strangers upon Earth*, Heb. 11. 13. and the *Pſalmiſt*, in the words immediately foregoing my Text, *Pſalm* 39. 12. owns it to God, *I am a Sojourner, and a Stranger here*: yea, this World is not only a ſtrange Land, but a waſte howling Wilderneſs to ſuch, wherein they live among wild Beaſts, Lions, Bears, Wolves, Tygers, and the like: Luſts within, and Devils without, ready daily to devour them; but now when Death comes, that carries them off from this ſtrange Land, this waſte howling Wilderneſs, to their own Home and Countrey, which is Heaven; yea to their Father's Houſe, there to live with him, to enjoy his Preſence, and to adore his Grace. *We know*, ſays the Apoſtle, *that when our Earthly Houſe of this Tabernacle* (ſpeaking of the Body) *ſhall be diſſolved, we have a Building with God, an Houſe not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens*, 2 Cor. 5. 1. And you know how Chriſt ſpeaks to his Diſciples, *John* 14. 2. *In my Fathers Houſe are many Manſions: if it were not ſo, I would have told you*, and thi-

ther

ther does Death carry you when it comes. Oh ſweet, Oh my Beloved, to go home, to go to our Father's Houſe, and to poſſeſs our Manſion there, that Manſion which our dear Lord and Head is gone before to prepare for us, how ſweet is this to think of? and how many Deaths may it ſweeten? Suppoſe one of you were ſome thouſand Miles diſtant from your Home, Country and Comforts, and you were in a waſte howling Wilderneſs, among Lyons and Bears, ready to devour you, a wide Sea alſo being between home and you: and ſuppoſe withal, that a Ship ſhould come and take you into her, and in a ſhort time ſet you down in your own Country, and among all your Friends and Comforts, would not this be a kindneſs? Why this is your caſe here, O ye preparing Souls, and this is the kindneſs Death does for you when it comes; while here, you are ten thouſand Miles diſtant from your Home and Country, your Friends and Comforts, and in a waſte howling Wilderneſs; but Death that ſwift Sailer comes and in a moment ſets you down in Heaven, your Home and Country; O how welcome ſhould it then be to you!

2. Death, whenever it comes, will carry thee from Trouble to Reſt, from a tempeſtuous Sea to a quiet Haven, there to lie at an eternal Anchor in the boſom of thy ſweet Lord. This World ever was, and (for any thing I know) ever will be a place of trouble to the People of God: ſure I am, Chriſt hath told us, *In the World you ſhall have Tribulation*, *John* 16. 33. And who of us does not find it made good? This World is a Tempeſtuous Sea, wherein the Waves liſt up themſelves, and the poor Saints are *afflicted and toſſed with Tempeſts*, and oftentimes *not comforted*, *Iſa.* 54. 11. We reade in *Jonah* 1. 13. that *the Sea wrought and was tempeſtuous, and the Mariners were feign to row hard to get the Ship to ſhore.* And truly, thus 'tis often in the caſe in hand, the Sea of this World is tempeſtuous, it works, and the poor Saints are fain to row hard to get ſafe to ſhore; yea, as we reade, *Acts* 27. 14. that *an Euroclydon, a tempeſtuous Eaſt-Wind aroſe, and beat upon* Paul, *and others in the Ship with him*, which was ready to break all in pieces! So truly the Saints in this World do meet with *Euroclydons*, Tempeſtuous Winds not a few,

few which beat upon them, and are ready to ſplit all, and ſink all; but now when Death comes, thoſe Storms are all made a Calm, and they (I mean the Saints) are brought into the deſired Haven: Death ſets them at reſt; 'tis indeed their diſmiſſion to Reſt; *There* (ſays *Job*, ſpeaking of the Grave) *the weary are at reſt*; Job 3. 17. Death ſends the Body to reſt, it frees it from all ſenſible Sufferings: When Death comes, thy weak Body, thy ſick Body, thy pained Body, thy conſumptive Body, ſhall have its diſmiſſion to Reſt: and Death ſends the Soul to Reſt, that Reſt in God and with God: *Bleſſed are the dead which die in the Lord, henceforth they reſt from their Labours.* Rev. 14. 13. and you have, I think, both together in one Scripture, *Iſa.* 57. 2. where, ſpeaking of the Righteous, 'tis ſaid, *They ſhall enter into Peace, they ſhall reſt in their Beds.* Hence we reade, that *there remaineth a Reſt to the People of God*, Heb. 4. 9. indeed it remains, 'tis not here; but when Death comes, that ſets them down in this remaining Reſt. Oh what a kindneſs muſt this be? Reſt! O how ſweet is Reſt? how deſirable is Reſt? and Reſt too

after

after long and hard labour and trouble? How ſweet is Reſt to the labouring Man, that hath wrought hard all the day? How ſweet is Reſt to the weary Traveller, that hath gone a long and dirty Journey? How ſweet is Reſt to the ſolicitous Mariner, and how welcome is the Harbour to him, eſpecially after having been long toſt and beaten with Storms and Tempeſts? And how ſweet will Reſt be to the poor, troubled, tempted, labouring, travelling Saint, whoſe whole Life has been little elſe but Trouble, Labour, and ſore Travel; who here could ſcarce all his days find a reſting palace for the Sole of his Foot, the World as to him being covered with a deluge?

3. Death, whenever it comes, will turn your Conflicts into Victory; this *Aceldama*, or Field of Blood (for ſuch is this World) into a Mount of Triumph, and a Throne of Glory. What is this World but an *Aceldama*, a Field of Blood to the poor Saints? Sure I am, this Life is little elſe but a perpetual War and Conflict with Luſts, with Devils, with Afflictions, and with Temptations, hence 'tis called *a fight*, *a warfare*, and the like:

and

and the Enemies which they in this Warfare have to grapple with, are formidable Enemies: *We wreſtle not*, ſays the Apoſtle, *with Fleſh and Blood, but with Principalities and Powers, and ſpiritual Wickedneſſes*, Eph. 6. 12, 13. We wreſtle not with Fleſh and Blood, that is, with Men, or any thing that is frail and weak; no, we have more potent and formidable Enemies to deal withal; we wreſtle and conflict with Devils, who are potent, ſubtile, and indefatigable. *Enemies* (as *Calvin* obſerves upon the place) *which wound before they appear, and kill before they are ſeen; Enemies which deal not only by force and power, but who are dreadfully crafty and ſubtile, yea Enemies which have fiery Darts to caſt at us*, as afterwards he ſpeaks. And for my own part, I think it were well for us, over what it is, if theſe were the worſt Enemies we had to grapple and conflict with; but there are Legions of Luſt within (which I look upon to be worſe Enemies) which we do and muſt wreſtle with (inteſtine Enemies are in many reſpects the worſt) theſe *war againſt our Souls*, 1 *Pet.* 2. 11. and were it not for theſe, all the Devils in Hell could

could do us no hurt. Thus this Life is to the Saints a Warfare, a Conflict; and O the Wounds, the Bruiſes, the Blood-ſhed which they are expoſed unto in this War! now their Peace, and then their Grace; now their Comforts, and then their Conſciences are ſorely wounded, and they lie a bleeding for days, and weeks, and months together; yea, ſometimes like him that was travelling from *Jeruſalem* to *Jericho*, they are wounded and left half dead, and did not the good *Samaritan* paſs by, taking Compaſſion on them, and pour in of his Wine and Oil, his Blood and Spirit, into their Wounds, they would ſoon be wholly dead: Well, but now when Death comes, that puts an end to this War, and ſets them all down upon a Throne of Triumph: *To him that overcometh* (ſays Chriſt) *will I grant to ſit with me upon my Throne, even as I alſo overcame, and am ſate down with my Father on his Throne*, Rev. 3. 21. When Death comes, then you begin and eternal Triumph with Chriſt; then the Palm will be put into your hands, and you ſhall triumphingly cry, Victory, Victory, for ever. O how ſweet will this be!

how

how ſweet is the Victory to a Souldier that has been long and hard put to it in the Battel; and indeed, the harder the Battel the more glorious the Triumph. 'Tis a ſweet and great ſaying which I have read in *Aug.* to this purpoſe, *The Conqueror*, ſaith he, *triumphs; and unleſs he had fought, he had never conquered: and by how much the greater his danger and difficulty was in the Battel, by ſo much the greater is his Joy in the Triumph.* O Sirs, not only will Death ſet you upon a Mount of Triumph; but know for your Encouragment, the ſharper your Conflicts and Warfare have been here, the more glorious will your Triumph be, when Death ſhall ſet you upon the Throne.

4. Death, whenever it comes, will change your Bondage into Liberty, your ſpiritual Thraldom into glorious Freedom; and is not this a kindneſs? Poor Soul, one thing which here thou bleedeſt and groaneſt under, is that ſpiritutal Bondage and Thraldom which thou lieſt under: and indeed this World is no other than a Priſon, a Dungeon, an Houſe of Bondage to thee, the Land of thy Captivity: Here thou lieſt in Chains

and

and Fetters, the Chains and Fetters of Sin and Guilt; yea, and the Iron ſometimes enters into thy Spirit. Hence we reade of *the Bondage of Corruption*, which indeed is the ſoreſt Bondage in the World, a worſe Bondage ten thouſand times than that which *Iſrael* groaned and ſighed under in *Egypt*, *who* yet *were made to ſerve with rigour, and whoſe Lives were made bitter with hard Bondage*, *Exod.* 1. 13, 14. Truly this Luſt and the other Luſt, this Corruption and the other Corruption, are as ſo many *Egyptians*, cruel Task-maſters, which make thee ſerve with rigour, and thy Life bitter to thee with hard Bondage, and O how doſt thou groan and ſigh under the Bondage of a proud, dead, hard, carnal, unbelieving Heart, an Heart bent to backſliding from God! And indeed, who that is ſenſible of it, can but groan under it? This drew that heavy groan from *Paul*, and bitter out-cry, *Rom.* 7. 24. *O wretched Man that I am!* ſays he, Why *Paul*, what is the matter? Oh, ſays he, *I find a Law in my Members, warring againſt the Law in my Mind, and bringing me into Captivity to the Law of Sin and Death.* I am by Sin brought into

Captivity

Captivity to Sin, and I have a body of Sin and Death lying heavy upon me, heavier than a Mountain of Braſs or Iron; and who can but groan? and as 'twas with him, ſo 'tis with all the Saints in their meaſure. Well, but when Death comes, Sirs, that will turn all this your Bondage into Liberty, yea into *the glorious Liberty of the Children of God*, Rom. 8. 21. that will turn again this your Captivity: and O how ſweet will that be? You have ſome little taſtes of this Liberty here; for *where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty*, 2 Cor. 3. 7. and the taſtes of it are ſweet, very ſweet; but O how ſweet will the full enjoyment on't be? *Paul* breaks out into Praiſes in the Faith of it before-hand, *I thank God through Jeſus Chriſt*, Rom. 7. 25. O Soul, how ſhould this make thee long for Death? Can a Priſon, can a Houſe of Bondage, can a ſtate of Thraldom be pleaſant to thee? Canſt thou be well-pleaſed to lie in Chains and Fetters of Sin and Guilt? Shouldſt thou not rather welcome that which alone would work thy deliverance?

5. Death, whenever it comes, will be the Death of all your Sins, and the perfection

perfection of all your Graces? and will not that be a kindneſs? Poor Saint, how doſt thou here bleed and groan under the ſenſe of the life and vigour of thy Sins on the one hand, and of the weakneſs and imperfection of thy Graces on the other hand: yea, how great are the conflicts and holy contentions of thy Spirit to kill and bring down the one, and to quicken and perfect the other? How doſt thou, with the holy Apoſtle of old, *forgetting thoſe things which are behind, follow after, that thou mayeſt apprehend that for which alſo thou art apprehended of Chriſt Jeſus, preſſing towards the mark, &c.* Phil. 3. 12, 13, 14. O the watchings, the warrings, the wreſtlings of thy Soul for more Grace, more holineſs, more victory over, and cleanſing from Sin! Oh the many Prayers and Tears, Sighs and Groans that thou poureſt out between God and thy Soul, in order hereunto! Theſe things are the buſineſs of thy Life; yea, and after all, Sin is ſtill ſtrong and lively, and Grace is ſtill weak and imperfect; the ſenſe of which breaks thy Heart almoſt, and makes thee go mourning all the day long: What daily cleanſing thy ſelf

and yet ſtill unclean? daily perfecting Holineſs, yet ſtill imperfect? Oh how ſad is this? Well, but Soul, when Death comes, things will be ſtrangely alter'd with thee; that will do that for thee in one moment, which thou by a whole Life of Prayers, Tears, Faith, Watching, Warring, Labouring, couldſt not do; 'twill make thee perfect: Hence thoſe above are ſaid to be ſo, *The Spirits of juſt Men made perfect*, Heb. 12. 23. then *all that is imperfect will be done away, and that which is perfect ſhall come*, 1 Cor. 13. 10. perfect Grace, perfect Holineſs. Now there is much lacking in thy Faith, thy Love, thy Obedience, thy Humility, thy Heavenlineſs, thy Joy and Delight in God; but Death, when it comes, will make up all in a moment: yea, now thou art ſtained and defiled with Sin, and this Luſt and the other Luſt ſtirs, and works, and wars within thee; but when Death comes, that will purge away all: Death is the Saints only perfect cleanſer through Chriſt: indeed 'tis ſaid of wicked Men and Hypocrites, that *their Iniquity ſhall lie down with them in the Duſt*, Job 20. 11. which is a dreadful word indeed: Death does not kill

their

their Sins; no, they live in the Grave; they go with them into the other World, and will there live in them for ever, which will be a great part of their Torment: 'twill be indeed (however they may now think of it) the one half of Hell: for what is Hell, but Sin at the higheſt, and Wrath at the hotteſt? but though it be thus with wicked ones, yet 'tis otherwiſe with the Saints; Death, through the Grace of Chriſt, will for ever put a period to your Sin, and perfect your Graces: O ſweet! who would not welcome Death!

6. Death, whenever it comes, will ſet thee above all afflictive Diſtances between God, Chriſt, the Comforter, and thee, and will ſet down thy Soul in the full, conſtant, and immediate Viſion and Fruition of all for ever; and is not this ſweet? Poor Saint, here thou complaineſt, that *God is a ſtranger to thee, and as a wafaring Man, that turneth aſide to tarry but for a night*: Thou haſt only now and then a ſhort viſit from him, *Jer.* 14. 8. Thou complaineſt that *thy Beloved withdraws himſelf, and is gone*, Cant. 5. 6. Thou complaineſt that *the Comforter that ſhould relieve thy Soul*

is far from thee, Lam. 1. 18. Thou complaineſt of many ſad and woful Diſtances from God, and of the lowlineſs of thy Communion, and well thou mayſt! for indeed, for how little a portion is there here ſeen, or enjoyed of him by thee? Well, but when Death comes, that will lift thee above all thoſe Diſtances between God and thee, Chriſt and thee, and ſet thee down in the full, conſtant, and immediate Viſion and Fruition of him for ever; the thoughts of which made *Paul*, and others, to deſire to be gone, and to chooſe Death rather than Life, 2 Cor. 7. 6, 7, 8. *We are confident* (ſays he) *knowing that whilſt we are at home in the Body, we are abſent from the Lord, for we walk by Faith, not by Sight; we are confident, I ſay, and willing rather to be abſent from the Body, and to be preſent with the Lord.* Pray obſerve, *Paul* enjoyed as much of God and Chriſt here, as moſt did; and yet all that Communion he enjoyed here, he accounted as no Communion to that which he ſhould enjoy after Death; while we are preſent *in the Body*, ſays he, that is, while we live in this World, *we are abſent from the Lord*, abſent from God and Chriſt, our

Com-

Communion here is but diſtance and eſtrangement, ſo low and unconſtant is it, in compariſon of what we know we ſhall enjoy after Death; and therefore, ſays he, we had rather be abſent from the Body, we had rather be gone hence and be preſent with the Lord: Death will bring us to another-gueſs preſence and enjoyment of God and Chriſt, than here we ſhall ever be able to reach unto. Alas! All we enjoy of God and Chriſt here, is but as an earneſt, ſo the Apoſtle ſpeaks in the Verſe foregoing: *He that hath wrought us for this ſelf-ſame thing, is God, who alſo hath given us the earneſt of the Spirit:* but when Death comes, we ſhall enjoy the full Inheritance: All we enjoy here is but as the firſt-fruits; *we that have the firſt-fruits of the Spirit,* ſays the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 8. 23. but when Death comes, we ſhall have the full vintage, full incomes of Love, full manifeſtations of Light, and Life, and Glory, *fulneſs of Joy and Pleaſure* in the Divine Preſence, *Pſal.* 16. 11. full embraces in Chriſt's Boſom, full views of his Face, full viſions of his Glory. Death, when it comes, will bring us to the Beatifical Viſion, which is all good and happineſs

in one; *Bleſſed are the pure in Heart, for they ſhall ſee God*, Mat. 5. 8. They do ſee *God* now, they ſee him by Faith, and thoſe ſights of him are ſweet, glorious, Soul-raviſhing, and transforming ſights: but after Death they ſhall have other ſights of him, ſuch ſights of him as will even infinitely ſurpaſs all that ever they had, or were capable of here. Here *they ſee him but through a Glaſs darkly*; that is, they have but low, obſcure, mediate ſights of him; they ſee and enjoy but little of him; but when Death comes then *they ſhall ſee him face to face*, that is, fully, clearly, immediately, 1 *Cor.* 12. 12. The Sum is, as a learned Man gives it us, that *in this Life we have but low and ſlender ſights and enjoyments of God, in compariſon of what we ſhall ſee, know, and enjoy of him in Eternal Life.* Glaſ. Rhet. Here they ſee but his back parts, as *God* ſaid to *Moſes*; but when Death comes, they ſhall ſee his Face, that is, his Glory: here they ſee him but negatively, as it were what he is not! but then they ſhall ſee him as he is, 1 *John* 3. 2. *We ſhall ſee him as he is*, in all his glorious Excellencies and Perfections. In ſhort, they ſhall then have ſuch ſights and Enjoyments of *God*

and

and Chriſt, as ſhall eternally fill, delight, ſolace, ſatisfie, and ſet at reſt their Souls for ever; ſuch ſights and enjoyments as ſhall ſo ſolace and ſatisfie them, as that there ſhall not be room for the leaſt tittle or *iota* of a deſire for ever; yea, ſuch ſights and enjoyments as ſhall ſo ſatisfie them, as to leave them under an utter impoſſibility of ever turning aſide from them to any thing elſe, and ſo an eternal impoſſibility of ſinning. Oh how ſweet muſt this be! and indeed the Schoolmen I find, and others from them, give this as one reaſon, why the Saints in Heaven are impeccable, becauſe the ſight and enjoyment they have of *God* there, is ſo full and ſatisfying, as that they cannot turn aſide to any thing elſe. O welcome Death, that brings us to thoſe ſights, thoſe enjoyments of *God*, the chief good. Once more.

7. Death, whenever it comes, will bring you to, and ſet you down in the enjoyment of an Eternal Sabbath: and Oh how ſweet is this! *There remaineth a Reſt* (the word is, *a Sabbath, or Sabbatiſm*) *to the People of God*, Heb. 4. 9. Ay, but when ſhall they enjoy it? why truly, when Death comes, what will enter

them upon it immediately, upon the night of Death, dawns the Eternal Sabbath. True, the Saints enjoy a Sabbath here, and the Sabbath to them is the ſweeteſt and amiableſt day in all the Week, 'tis a day of joy and holy feaſting to their Souls; and O how many times do your Souls long for it? but alas theſe Sabbaths have an end; but the Sabbath Death will ſet them down in, will be an Eternal Sabbath, an Eternal Sabbath, wherein they ſhall be employed in the higheſt acts of Worſhip and Adoration, even Love, Praiſe, Admiration, and Hallelujah's for ever; wherein there will be no Wearineſs, no Faintneſs, wherein there ſhall be no intermiſſion; no going to Duties and breaking off again, as here we do; but an whole Eternity ſhall be imployed in acts of Divine Worſhip and Adoration; wherein there ſhall be no Deadneſs, no Dulneſs, no ſpiritual Indiſpoſitions, no unſuitableneſs in us to thoſe high and holy Exerciſes which this Sabbath will be fill'd with: but our Souls ſhall be perfectly ſuited to, and fitted for thoſe glorious Employs, wherein not a few only, and thoſe ſome Saints and ſome Sinners, ſome good and

ſome

ſome bad, ſhall joyn together in Acts of Worſhip; but an innumerable Company both of Saints and Angels, and theſe all perfect holy, *Heb.* 12. 22, 23, 24. Oh how ſweet and glorious will this be? 'Tis a great ſaying which I have read in a worthy Divine, *Sabbaths here are comfortable*, ſays he, *and we have taſted ſome ſweet, ſome comfort in ſome Sabbaths; but taſte all the comfort that ever you had in all the Sabbaths you have enjoyed here, and all will be nothing to the Comforts and Sweetneſs of the Eternal Sabbath.* Alas! the perpetual Sabbath that ſhall be hereafter, that will be the Accompliſhment of all theſe Sabbaths; how ſweet then muſt that be! O ye Saints of God lift up your Heads, Death will ſet you down in this Sabbath. How have ſome of us longed ſometimes for the coming of the Sabbath! And how have we grieved when it has been gone? Well, but when Death comes, that will bring you to a Sabbath that ſhall never end. 'Tis a ſweet ſaying of *Auſtin*, *There* (ſays he, ſpeaking of Heaven) *is the great Sabbath, a Sabbath that hath no evening, no end, in which we ſhall reſt and behold, behold and love, love and praiſe for ever.*

Oh

Oh bleſſed be God for this Sabbath: and bleſſed be God that Death, when it comes, ſhall bring us to this Sabbath. Well then, fear not Death, dread not Death, but be found diligent and faithful in the uſe of the helps preſcrib'd for the preparing of your Souls for it; and then 'twill greatly befriend you when ever it comes, and you may exult and rejoyce in it.

I ſhall now conclude, but I muſt firſt beg all that reade this plain Diſcourſe, deeply and frequently to conſider and contemplate theſe things.

1. Every day ſeriouſly conſider and contemplate the exceeding worth of your Souls, and the great things they are capable of. 'Tis ſad to think what low Thoughts the moſt of Men have of their Souls, they are content to ſell their Souls, to loſe their Souls, to damn their Souls, and all for a Luſt, for a little of this World, a little carnal, ſenſual Pleaſure and Delight here, which is but for a moment. That rebuke which *Auſtin* gave one, is due to the moſt; *How comes it to paſs*, ſays he, *that among all the good things thou wilt let nothing be in an ill caſe, but thy Self, thy Soul!* Truly the

the moſt of Men are ſolicitous to have all well but their Souls; they will have it go well with their Bodies, their Names, their Eſtates, the Families, but their Souls they mind not. But, my Beloved, I beſeech you think deeply and frequently of the worth of your Souls, and the concerns of them: O 'tis your Soul that is you principal part. Chriſt, who beſt knew the worth of Souls, tells you that the whole World is nothing to one Soul, and that the gain of the one can't recompence the loſs of the other, no not in the leaſt, *Mat.* 16. 26. And you know what a price he was pleaſed to pay for Souls, even his own Blood, his precious Blood, Life and all, 1 *Pet.* 1. 19. Beſides, there are two things which ſpeak the Soul to be a thing of unſpeakable worth and value: its vaſt Capacity, and its abſolute Imortality. (1.) The Capacity of the Soul ſpeaks its worth: O what great things is the Soul of Man capable of! There is a kind of Infiniteneſs, as a worthy Divine obſerves, in the Soul of Man, 'tis capable of even an infinite Happineſs, or an infinite Miſery; 'tis capable of eternal Life, or eternal Death; 'tis capable of unconceivable

ceivable communication sboth of Love and Wrath, and must one day be fill'd with the one or the other of them; 'tis capable of knowing God, of bearing his Image, of enjoying Glorious Communion with him, yea of Living God's own Life, and in a participation of his own Blessedness: look whatever the Angels enjoy, look whatever the humane Soul of Christ enjoys, that the Soul is capable of the enjoyment of. Sinner, O how precious does this speak it to be! and how great should thy concern be for it while day and season lasts! Contemplate it therefore a little, and say, O how precious is my Soul, and what great things is it capable of! And it being so, why do I take up in such low, poor, dungy, drossy things, as the best of Sin, and this World are? Secondly, the Immortality of the Soul argues its worth. The Soul never dies: it is indeed but as it were a spark, a beam of God's own Immortality breathed into the Body; at least there is a stamp and impress thereof upon it: the Body, that dies, that returns to Dust; but the Soul, that lives, that goes to God, *Eccles.* 12. 7. As the Mortality of the Body, as a learned

Man

Man obſerves; ſo the Immortality of the Soul is here aſſerted. Beſides, *Abraham*, *Iſaac* and *Jacob*, with the reſt of the good old Patriarchs, and the Servants of God, who died long ſince, are notwithſtanding living ſtill; ſo Chriſt argues, you know, *Mat.* 22. 32. that is, their Souls live, as indeed do the Souls of all that are gone hence; their Souls will live either in Happineſs or Miſery, with God, or Devils; and ſo muſt thine and mine, Sinner. When our Bodies ſhall be eaten by the Worms, our Souls will live either in Heaven or Hell. O think of this, daily contemplate and ſay, I have a Soul within me, that muſt live for ever, and that as filled with even an infinite Happineſs or Miſery; I have a Soul within me, that is capable of unſpeakable Joys, or unconceivable Torments, and in the one or the other it will, it muſt live for ever: why then am I not more concerned for it?

2. Seriouſly contemplate, and daily keep your Spirits on the Thoughts of the wonderful weight and importance of Eternity, the greateſt of the concern of the other World. O Eternity, Eternity! O vaſt, great, boundleſs Eternity! how

how ſhall I do to ſpeak of thee; how are my Thoughts loſt, and my Spirit overwhelmed, when I ſet my ſelf to contemplate, how great, how weighty a thing thou art? An endleſs, boundleſs, bottomleſs ſtate; a ſtate that admits of neither change, pauſe, nor period for ever. A ſtate of unconceiveable Happineſs or Miſery: Happineſs in the enjoyment, or Miſery in the loſs of and baniſhment from God and Chriſt for ever. Happineſs in the fruition of infinite Love, or Miſery in the Revelation of infinite Wrath! one of which every Soul muſt be the object of for ever. Eternity: ſuch is the weight of it in it ſelf, that indeed we know not how to conceive of it, every thing but Eternity has an end at laſt: ſo innumerable as the Stars of Heaven are, yet there is a laſt Star, and the number of them has an end, though we cannot reach it: ſo innumerable as the Sands on the Sea-ſhore are, yet there is a laſt Sand, and the number of them has an end, could we reach to it: ſo numerous as the Piles of Graſs, which are now, and from the Creation of the World have been, and to the end of the World ſhall be, are, yet there is an end

of

of the number of them, could we reach it; there is a laſt pile, a laſt ſpire of Graſs: ſo innumerable as the Grains of Corn, in all the Harveſts that ever were, or ſhall be, are, yet the number of them has an end, though we cannot reach it, and there is a laſt grain: ſo innumerable, as all the drops of Rain that ever did fall, or ſhall fall upon the Earth, from the Creation to the end of the World, are, yet ſtill there is a laſt drop, yea, and that though all the drops contained in the wide and deep Sea be added thereunto: ſo innumerable as the Children of Men have been, are, and ſhall be, to the end of all things, ſo innumerable as all the Hairs of the Head of them all have been, are, and will be: ſo innumerable as all the Thoughts of the Hearts of all throughout all Ages have been, are and will be: ſo innumerable as all the Brutes and Animals, which both the Earth and the Sea have brought forth, do and will bring forth, are, and will be, yet ſtill the number of them has an end, could we reach it; and there is a laſt Man, a laſt Hair, a laſt Thought, a laſt Animal: ſhould all the vaſt Body of the Heavens, which our Eyes behold, be full written

with

with figures by the hand of an Angel; yet the number of those figures would have an end, and there would be a last figure: but as for Eternity, that has no end, no last. Could all those vast numbers prementioned be put together into one, who could in the least conceive of the thousand thousand part of it? Yet all this were nothing to Eternity, no not a thousand thousandth part of it? Thus Eternity is unconceivably weighty in it self, and 'tis Eternity indeed that puts weight into all other things: 'tis Eternity that puts weight into the future Judgment. What were that Judgment, but that 'tis eternal Judgment? *Heb.* 6. 2. 'Tis Eternity that puts weight indeed into the happiness and joys of Heaven: what were that Happiness, and those Joys, were they not eternal? Hence 'tis called *Eternal Life, Eternal Glory, a never-fading Crown, an everlasting Kingdom, Joy and Pleasure for evermore.* So (you know) the Scripture speaks of it, as that which is its Crown and Perfection: hence we reade of *being for ever with the Lord*, 1 Thess. 4. 17. to be with the Lord is sweet: *Peter* found it so; all the Saints in their measure find it so here. But to be with the Lord

[for

[for ever] that makes it infinitely ſweet indeed: thus and thus [for ever] in the Boſom of my Fathers Love, and there [for ever] in the views of my Redeemer's Glory, and there [for ever] joyned with in an innumerable company of Angels, in loving, praiſing, admiring, adoring, and ſinging Hallelujahs to God and the Lamb; and this [for ever] to be fully ſwallowed up in the Divine Life, the Divine Will, the Divine Preſence, the Divine Fulneſs, and this [for ever] to be ſet above all Sin, to be delivered from an unavoidable neceſſity of ſinning, to an abſolute impoſſibility of ſinning, and this [for ever] O how ſweet, how glorious is this! this one word, *Eternity*, or for ever, is that which puts great ſweetneſs into it. Again, 'tis Eternity that indeed puts weight into the Miſeries and Torments of the Damned: what were the Fire of Hell, were it not unquenchable Fire? What were the Worm there, were it not a never-dying Worm? When the Scripture would ſpeak of the exceeding greatneſs and ſeverity of thoſe Torments, (you know) 'tis in this Language: *There the Worm never dies, and the Fire is never*

never quenched, Mark 9. 44. There Miſeries and Torments are Eternal; and indeed Hell would be no Hell, in compariſon, had it not Eternity in it. Moſt weighty is the Meditation which I have read in a learned and holy Man to this purpoſe: *O Eternity! Eternity! O never-ending Eternity! O Eternity that can be meaſured by no ſpace of time, that can be perceived or apprehended by no humane Intellect or Underſtanding! How unconceivably doſt thou augment the Torments of the Damned!* And but a few Lines after, he again cries out; *O Eternity! Eternity! thou, and thou alone doeſt aggravate the Torments, the Puniſhment of the Damned, beyond all meaſure.* Heavy is the Puniſhment of the Damned becauſe of its ſharpneſs, its extenſiveneſs, its univerſality, there being all Plagues and Puniſhments in it; but ſays he, it is moſt heavy, becauſe of its Eternity. Oh 'tis this indeed that makes it intolerably great and heavy. O not only to be baniſhed from God and Chriſt, to be driven from the Beatifical Viſion, but to be baniſhed and driven from hence for ever. O doleful, to be in the Flames, to ſuffer the Vengeance of Eternal Fire, to be ſinning, and always bearing

bearing the punishment of Sin, and all this [for ever;] O this makes it out of measure heavy, thus, and always thus, under the Wrath of God, and for ever so! this puts weight into it. Thus you see a little of the weight of Eternity, O contemplate it daily.

3. Consider and contemplate how doleful a thing it will be to miscarry for ever; and, on the other hand, what a wide door of Mercy there is open to you, and the fair opportunity you have of making a blessed provision for your Souls and Eternity.

1. Consider and contemplate how doleful a thing it will be to miscarry for ever, to perish eternally; the more worth there is in the Soul, and the greater weight there is in Eternity, the more doleful it will be to perish or miscarry: as to the Interest of them to miscarry in our Estate, in our Trade, in our Name, in the change of our Condition in this World, or the like, this is sad, and sinks many; but Oh what is this to the miscarriage of the Soul for ever! what is this to miserable Eternity, to the loss of God, of Christ, of the Comforter, of Heaven, and Eternal Life? what is this to the Wrath of God, to the Vengence of Eternal Fire, to utter Darkness,

to

to blackneſs of darkneſs for ever. O Sirs, to have Infiniteneſs and Eternity combine againſt you to make you miſerable, and to be for ever as miſerable as Infiniteneſs and Eternity can make you, (as aſſuredly you will, in caſe you neglect to make proviſion for your Souls, and the future Life) O how dreadful, how doleful will this be! and what bitter Lamentations will it fill you with for ever! Did *Eſau* weep when he had loſt his Birthright? And did *Lyſimachus* upbraid himſelf, and bewail his Folly, for parting with his Kingdom for a draught of Water? O then how will you weep and wail, and even tear and torment you ſelves for ever for your Sin and Folly, when you ſhall find, that for a little of this World, for the ſatisfaction of a Luſt, for a few dreggy droſſy Pleaſures, and ſenſual Delights, or perhaps through a meer ſloth of Spirit, you have loſt your Souls, and have plunged your ſelves into an infinite Ocean of Eternal Woe and Miſery, whence there is no Redemption for ever for you! Pray lay that Scripture to heart now, *Luke* 13. 27, 28. *Depart from me*, ſays Chriſt, *all ye workers of Iniquity*: Depart, here is the Doom that will paſs at laſt upon every

every unrepenting, unbelieving Sinner, every Soul that makes not ready for a dying hour; well, and what then? *there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of Teeth, when ye ſhall ſee* Abraham, Iſaac, *and* Jacob, *and all the Prophets in the Kingdom of God, and you thruſt out.* O Sirs, when you ſhall ſee ſuch and ſuch lodged ſafe in Heaven, in the Boſom of Chriſt, and your ſelves ſhut out; and not only ſo, but caſt into utter Darkneſs, as you have it added, *Mat.* 18. 12. When you ſhall ſee your ſelves ſhut up in the Infernal Pit, and there ſeal'd up under God's Eternal Wrath; O then ye will weep and gnaſh your Teeth indeed; then your own Conſcience will be eternally a ſecond Hell to you, tearing and tormenting your Souls in the remembrance of your Sin and Folly, in neglecting to prepare for, and make ſure of a better State. Think of theſe things ere it be too late.

2. Conſider and contemplate what a wide Door of Mercy there is open to you, and what a fair opportunity God gives you, to make a bleſſed proviſion for your Souls and Eternity. What ſhall I ſay? Why Sirs, the way of Salvation is made plain to you, and you are daily called

called to the Marriage-Supper of the Lambe; the great King of Heaven invites you to come and partake of his Gospel-Feast; by one and another Servant of his which he sends to you, he lets you know that all things are ready, all that your Souls can need to make them happy for ever; Christ is ready, and in him Life is ready, Grace is ready, Peace is ready, Pardon is ready, a compleat Righteousness, or your Justification and Acceptation with God is ready, Heaven is ready, Salvation is ready, and withal he bids you come, yea he earnestly importunes and solicites you to come and feast your Souls upon these things; he freely and frequently offers himself and all to you, intreating your acceptance: yea more, he opens the Arms of his Love to you, assuring you of most cordial Welcome, and ready Reception, notwithstanding all your Sins and Miscarriages. *Him that cometh unto me, I will by no means cast out*, Joh. 6. 37. Let him be who and what he will, a young or an old Sinner, a small or a great Sinner, a Sinner that hath stood it out against me a little or a long time, I will not cast him out, my Grace is free, my Fulness is large and sufficient, my

Blood

Blood is precious, and this has an infinite virtue in it; my Spirit is powerful and efficacious; I am every way mighty to ſave, able to *ſave to the utmoſt all that come to God by me*; yea 'tis my Work and Buſineſs to ſave, my Father ſeal'd and ſent me for that end, and for that end came I into the World, and there did and ſuffered ſuch things as I did; and I may not, I will not caſt off any poor Soul that will come and partake of Me and My Fulneſs, and that would fain be helped on towards Life and Bleſſedneſs: This is really the Language of Chriſt to poor Sinners; yea more, he ſends his Spirit to enlighten, to convince, to perſwade, to draw and allure them, and he does move in them, and ſtrive with them: O what a wide door of Mercy is there here open to you, Sirs! and how fair is your opportunity of preparing for, and making ſure of a bleſſed Eternity? O accordingly as you love your Souls, and would live for ever; come into Chriſt, come and apply and improve him in a way of believing, for the good of your Eternal Souls: in his ſtrength ſet upon repenting, believing, work the work of your Souls and Eternity

nity; and your day being so bright, as indeed it is, O labour to know the things of your Peace in your day! lest neglecting them, Christ speedily say of you, as once with Tears in his Eyes he did of neglecting *Jerusalem*, Luke 19. 42. *O that thou hadst known in thy day the things which belong unto thy Peace! but now they are hid from thine Eyes.* ——— I have done: I'll close all with that holy wish for you, my dear Congregation, and my self, that *Austin* was wont to make for himself, and his People, namely, *That as they had been often crowded together to worship God in that Earthly Temple wherein he preach'd, so they might eternally live together in the Heavenly Temple above:* So my wish and desire is, That we, my Beloved, you and I, who have often been throng'd and crowded together in an Earthly House, may live together eternally, and eternally adore God together in our Father's House above: and if we shall never preach, and pray, hear and sing together more on Earth, (as I am apt to think we shall not) yet that we may praise, love, and admire God, and sing Hallelujahs to him for ever together in Heaven. *Amen, Amen.*

FINIS.

IMPRIMATUR,

Guliel. Wigan, Decemb. 6th, 1673.

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF SCOTLAND